



THE BRAILLE MONITOR

Voice of the
National Federation of the Blind

APRIL - 1972

The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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If you or a friend wish to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the sum of \$____(or, "____ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: ____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons and to be held and administered by direction of its Executive Committee."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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NFB CONVENTION BULLETIN

by
John Myers

The Illinois Congress of the Blind, host affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind Convention for 1972, cordially invites all Federationists to join us at the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, for what is going to be the largest and best Convention in our history. Illinoisans are busy at work doing their utmost to see that everyone will have an informative and enjoyable time. The Convention will take place from July 2 through July 7, but it has been the practice of more and more conventioners to arrive early and join in on the Federation Convention spirit.

RESERVATIONS

President Jernigan, our most able leader, has again done a topnotch job in securing unbelievably low room rates. Guests of the Palmer House are accustomed to paying \$26 for singles and \$28 for doubles, but NFB conventioners will only pay \$8 for singles and \$12 for doubles. Banquet tickets will cost \$6.50 each. You must agree that under any circumstances, these rates cannot be matched. Write or call in your reservation now! The address and phone number are: 17 East Monroe, Chicago, Illinois 60690; 312-726-7500.

DOOR PRIZES

Be sure to register early so that you will be eligible for the valuable and plentiful prizes. We thank those affiliates who have already contributed prizes, and urge all others to do so without delay. Remember, it is recommended that each prize be valued at \$25 or more. Send all

prizes to: Mrs. Camille Myers, 1790-D West Estes Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626. Help to make our door prizes greater than ever.

HOTEL FACILITIES

The Palmer House is one of the highlights of Chicago, existing for over 100 years and at its present location since 1926. It is the world's third largest hotel, having over 2200 sleeping rooms and encompassing nearly a square block. It is located in the heart of downtown Chicago and is bordered on the North by Monroe, on the West by State Street, on the South by Adams, and on the East by Wabash Avenue. Of course, the hotel is air-conditioned throughout for your comfort.

Most anything you may need can be found right in the hotel. The Palmer House itself has nine restaurants including Trader Vic's, the French Quarter, Palmer's Pub, and Town and Country. The pool is located on the seventh floor. You will also find a barber, beauty salon, drug store, florist, gift shop, famous clothing and jewelry stores, and may take advantage of the 24 hour valet service offered all guests. Various other shops are located throughout the hotel and you will even find a Palmer House museum which you might like to visit. If you wish to take in a fine evening of entertainment you may want to have dinner at the world famous Empire room.

TRANSPORTATION

Chicago is the transportation center of the nation; buses, trains, and planes come from all directions. Conventioners going by bus will probably arrive at the

Greyhound Station which is located five blocks from the hotel. You may easily secure a cab at the station or, if you are ambitious enough to walk, the hotel is located two blocks east and three blocks south of the station. If you are traveling by train, you may wish to note that all train stations are within a mile of the hotel and cabs are easily accessible. If you choose to fly, Continental Air Transport Company has buses leaving both airports going to the Palmer House. The fare is \$2.25 per person. Buses from O'Hare depart every 15 minutes except from 10 P.M. until 5 A.M. when they depart hourly. Buses from Midway depart every 30 minutes with the same exception. Cabs are available and will cost approximately \$7.00 from O'Hare and \$4.00 from Midway.

BANQUET

The highlight of the Convention, the banquet, will be held on Thursday evening, July 6th. You must be sure to attend, for it will add much to your appreciation of the Convention.

TOURS

This year's conventioners will have a choice of four tours scheduled for Wednesday, July 5, at noon. First, there will be a combination tour to the Illinois Visually Handicapped Institute and the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind. If you wish to gain some insight into services for the blind in Illinois, you won't miss this tour; the cost is \$2.00.

Second, you may wish to visit the Hadley School for the Blind in Winnetka, Illinois. Many of you may wish to meet the staff and some of the faculty of

Hadley, especially if you have taken courses through this, the only correspondence school for the blind in the world; cost is \$1.00.

Third, a trip to the Museum of Science and Industry has been arranged. The museum has an area of approximately 14 acres. You will visit a working coal mine, the captured German submarine, the U505, reminisce in yesterday's main street and look ahead to the house of tomorrow. This is one of the largest collections of exhibits in the world. Cost is \$2.00.

If, on the other hand, you would rather do some shopping in Chicago's world famous Loop, you may take the fourth choice. A number of volunteers will be happy to accompany you through Carson's, Field's, or on Chicago's "magnificent mile"—Michigan Avenue. The only cost involved will be your shopping and transportation expenses.

HOSPITALITY

The Illinois Congress of the Blind cordially welcomes you to visit the Illinois suite during Convention.

Save some of your energy to join the festivities on Wednesday night. Since the quarters of the Red Garter band are too small for the rapidly growing Federation, we have arranged for the Red Garter to come to us. There will be singing, dancing, and good time to be had by all. This group of musicians pleases everyone in Illinois as well as those who come to visit.

Illinois is the land of Lincoln. Its largest city, Chicago, is the hub of transportation and an important industrial center. The next two largest cities are

Rockford and Peoria; the capital is Springfield ranking fourth in population. Southern Illinois is known for its mining and agriculture; soybeans, corn, oats, and hay are grown. Its people are many and varied, and we are all looking forward to seeing you in July at the greatest NFB Convention ever.

WCWB-UNIQUE DEMOCRACY
WORLD COUNCIL
FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND

From:
M. Robert Barnett
To:
Members of the North and Central
American Delegations to WCWB
Subject:
Request for Postal Ballot Fill Vacancy on
Executive Committee
Date:
November 22, 1971

Greetings!

As you all know, the North American region, which includes the countries from Canada to Panama, is represented on the Executive Committee of the WCWB by five persons. The selection of those five persons was accomplished at the Assembly in New Delhi in 1969 in the usual manner of a regional caucus and mutual agreement among all of us.

Elected at that time were:

Mr. A. N. Magill, Canada
Mrs. Elisa M. de Stahl, Guatemala
Judge Reese H. Robrahn,
Mr. Howard H. Hanson and
Mr. M. R. Barnett (U. S.)

I believe you also know that the U. S. delegation, in its turn, is made up of nominees from six national groups. One of those groups, the American Association of Workers for the Blind, has informed me that it wishes to make a change in its representative on the delegation. They have asked that the name of Mr. Cleo Dolan be substituted for that of Mr. Howard Hanson. Mr. Dolan is currently the President of the Association, but his primary activity is that of Executive Director of the Cleveland (Ohio) Society for the Blind.

I am asking each of you to write to me at your earliest convenience to indicate whether you would agree that our regional representation on the Executive Committee may now pass over to Mr. Dolan instead of Mr. Hanson. It is not for me to, in any way, influence your opinion, and it should be clearly understood that if any of you wishes to propose the name of any other person who is a member of a national delegation, please do so. If I receive any such nominations, I will then submit all such names with that of Mr. Dolan, back to you for an actual voting process.

Incidentally, the fact that the United States holds three of the five seats has been of long standing and, so far as I have ever heard, with the full agreement of the other countries in the region.

Please let me hear from you soon.

M. Robert Barnett

December 16, 1971

Mr. M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

Dear Bob:

This will respond to your communication of November 22, 1971, concerning the vacancy on the Executive Committee of the World Council created by the change in delegate from the AAWB. Once before a situation of this type arose. At that time the National Federation of the Blind changed delegates, and it was ruled that the Federation thereby lost its seat on the Executive Committee. There was no memorandum sent to the rest of the North American delegation to ask that the new NFB delegate be put on the Executive Committee. Rather, the position was declared vacant, and a voting process was initiated. I think the same procedure should be followed in the present instance.

Let me make it clear that I have no personal objection to Mr. Dolan as an Executive Committeeman. How could I? I hardly know him. The point is that the memorandum which went out from you exerts some pressure (although I am sure such is not intended) for people simply to confirm Mr. Dolan.

If the fact that the AAWB representative was elected to the Executive Committee at the meeting in New Delhi gives any advantage to the new AAWB delegate, then the action which was formerly taken with respect to the NFB position is called into question. If there is no advantage to the new delegate

because of the election in New Delhi, then I would think a regular ballot should have gone out without any suggestion that Mr. Dolan be named to the Executive Committee.

In any case the National Federation of the Blind now officially requests that a regular ballot be circulated and that nominations be called for without any reference to any Executive Committee position which may or may not have been held by a former delegate. This, I would think, would be the regular and reasonable way to proceed.

Very truly yours,

Kenneth Jernigan, President
National Federation of the Blind

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

COPY
December 23, 1971

To:
Members of the WCWB Delegation
from Canada, United States,
Guatemala, Panama and Trinidad

From:
M. Robert Barnett
Vice President, WCWB

I am writing once more with regard to the problem which has been presented to us at our regional representation on the Executive Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

I wrote to all of you on November 22nd asking for a reaction with regard to whether Mr. Cleo Dolan should replace Mr. Howard Hanson on the Executive Committee, since the latter, meaning Mr. Hanson, has been replaced on the U. S. Delegation by Mr. Dolan. To repeat, Mr. Hanson was elected to the Executive Committee at New Delhi.

I have had an inquiry from Mr. Hanson as to the legality of Mr. Dolan's replacement of himself. I must again clarify for all of you the following:

1) At the national level in a given country, seats on a delegation may or may not be representative of organizations for or of the blind in that country. The WCWB constitution simply states that there should be representation of all interests in that country.

2) An individual elected at a general assembly as part of a regional group (in this case, North, South and Central America) must be a member of a national delegation in that region but does not represent an organization within that nation. This means that Mr. Hanson or for that matter, Mr. Dolan, is not assured of Executive Committee membership because of his membership on the U. S. Delegation nominated by the American Association of Workers for the Blind.

As of this writing, I have heard from almost all of you with the exception of Judge Robrahn and Ken Jernigan from the U.S.A., Mr. Collrin of Canada, Dr. Hernandez of Guatemala, Mrs. Guevara and Mrs. Arosemena of Panama, and Mr. d'Abadie of Trinidad. The responses I have received to date seem disposed to substitute Mr. Dolan for Mr. Hanson on

the Executive Committee.

I would appreciate those of you who have not responded doing so at your earliest convenience. If Mr. Dolan or some other individual is to travel to Moscow for the meeting in May, they need to be given the essential information about that meeting without further delay.

Happy New Year to you all.

MRB:bs

January 5th, 1972

Mr. Kenneth Jernigan
President
National Federation of the Blind
524 Fourth Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Ken:

Your letter of December 16th crossed in the mails with my last circular memorandum to the North and Central America delegates of December 23rd. Immediately thereafter, the flu epidemic which you may have read about in New York struck this office and it has been nip and tuck maintaining an anywhere near normal operation. I have, therefore, been unable to answer your letter in detail.

With this much time having gone by and upon reflection, I am wondering if you would not agree that the combination of the two circular memos have in effect accomplished what you say is officially requested by the National Federation. Rereading the memos, I do not believe that there was "pressure" on my part on

behalf of Cleo Dolan, because as stated if other names were suggested I would then conduct a specific mail ballot. Incidentally, I have had no replies from the second memo as yet.

Happy New Year.

Very sincerely yours,

Mr. Robert Barnett
Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

January 25, 1972

Mr. M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

Dear Bob:

I have given considerable thought to your letter of January 5, 1972, and I do not believe your earlier memos accomplish what the National Federation of the Blind has officially requested. If a position on any committee is vacated and if you send out a memo asking whether a given individual should fill that position, this constitutes a sort of pressure (even though unintentional). In any case this is not the ordinary method for conducting elections. Usually a position is declared vacant, and then nominations are called for. The name of one person is not circulated with the request that anybody else who wishes to present a name may do so and that name will then be sent around for consideration.

The damage has probably already been done, and a truly open and fair

election is probably now impossible. Even so I suggest that the form of fair play should now be followed even though the substance may be gone beyond recall. Once again the National Federation of the Blind officially requests that a ballot be circulated to the entire delegation, with no name given preference.

As I discussed with you earlier, a similar situation occurred once before in the North American delegation. At that time the representative of the National Federation of the Blind was elected by the WCWB convention to a seat on the Executive Committee. Subsequently the individual ceased to be the delegate from the National Federation of the Blind. You were then, as you are now, Chairman of the North American delegation. You declared the Executive Committee seat vacant and said that the NFB had no vested interest in it. You did not ask if people would agree to the NFB's new delegate assuming the seat. In fact, the NFB delegate was passed over. If it was fair for the NFB, surely it is fair for the AAAB--or are some people more equal than others?

I ask that this letter be circulated to the delegation, and I ask that the same procedure you used before be followed in the present instance. This would seem to be the just and reasonable way to go.

Cordially,

Kenneth Jernigan, President
National Federation of the Blind

February 2nd, 1972

To:
Members of the North and Central America
Delegations to WCWB

From:
M. Robert Barnett
American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

Subject:
Final Request for Election of Individual to
fill Executive Committee Vacancy

As of this date, some of you have answered my earlier two memoranda of November 22nd and December 23rd and some of you have not. For reasons which will become apparent from a reading of the enclosed copy of a letter to me from Mr. Kenneth Jernigan, I must now ask you to communicate with me, whether you have at an earlier date or not, and very specifically according to the following instructions.

You are now officially informed that there is a vacancy on the regional delegation to the Executive Committee of WCWB caused by the departure from the U. S. delegation of Mr. Howard Hanson, and as a consequence, his ineligibility to keep the seat to which he was elected at the Assembly in New Delhi.

By agreement with our Canadian and Central American colleagues, it has again been affirmed that three of the five regional seats should be filled by someone from the United States.

The person to be elected must be currently a member of our U. S. delegation, two others of whom already are on the Executive Committee--Reese

Robrahn and Robert Barnett.

Please wire or cable me not later than February 10th your choice among the following:

Kenneth Jernigan
Carl Davis
James Hyde
Cleo Dolan

On February 10th I will tally all replies and announce the decision to the Paris office of the World Council. Thanks again for your assistance.

February 7, 1972

Mr. M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

Dear Bob:

Today I received your memo of February 2, 1972, calling for an election to fill the vacancy on the WCWB Executive Committee. By the time you receive this letter you will have received my telegram casting a vote for Mr. James Hyde for the position.

As I indicated earlier, I think that a fair and meaningful election is probably not now possible. Your previous actions have made the results a foregone conclusion. Time will tell whether this is an accurate prediction--that is to say, Mr. Dolan either will or will not be elected. I predict that he will, with only one vote (namely, that of the National Federation of the Blind) for another candidate.

However, what is done is done. The National Federation of the Blind would request that, in future situations of this kind, no suggestions be made by the Chairman of the North American Delegation as to the person who should fill the vacancy and that fair and impartial procedures be followed in conducting elections.

Cordially,

Kenneth Jernigan, President
National Federation of the Blind

TELEGRAM

February 7, 1972

North American Delegation
World Council Welfare of the Blind
15 West 16th Street

The National Federation of the Blind votes for James Hyde to fill vacancy on WCWB Executive Committee.

Kenneth Jernigan
President
National Federation of the Blind

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

February 23, 1972

To:
Members of National Delegations, WCWB
North and Central American Region
From:

M. Robert Barnett, Chairman, U.S.
Delegation
Subject:
Conclusion of Mail Caucus

This is to advise you that Mr. Cleo Dolan of Cleveland, Ohio, President of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, received an almost unanimous vote from those of you who responded to my request for nomination of an individual to replace Mr. Howard Hanson as a regional member of the WCWB Executive Committee. As a matter of fact, only one other name was suggested but as a matter of courtesy to that individual I am refraining from mentioning his name.

I hope that each of you will accept my word that this caucus has been carried out in as objective and fair a manner as I possibly could have done it and that my feelings in the matter were totally impartial. I hope you will also join me in expressing our congratulations to Mr. Dolan.

MRB/ob

This correspondence is reminiscent of WCWB actions taken ten years ago. Below is a portion of an NFB Bulletin of August 1962.

"The contested seat had been held by the NFB since 1959 when its delegate was elected to a five year term by the World Assembly in his representative capacity. On a pretext that the seat had been vacated, President Baker, acting in collaboration with the American agencies for the blind, used the device of a postal ballot to assign the seat to an agency

representative.

"Although the Executive Committee at its Hanover meeting denied official hearing to the NFB delegate, it proceeded to put the issue of the Federation's seat on its regular agenda and to force through without debate a resolution supporting the disputed action of its president."

* * * * *

AURORANS LOSE FOUNDER

by

Donald Capps

[Reprinted from *The Palmetto Auroran*, February, 1972.]

Dr. Samuel Miller Lawton, beloved founder of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind, passed away on Wednesday, November 3rd. His death was very sudden and came as he and Mrs. Lawton had just completed the closing of their summer home in Ridgecrest, North Carolina and were preparing to return to their residence in Spartanburg. Death apparently was due to a heart attack. A Baptist minister for many years, Dr. Lawton and Mrs. Lawton enjoyed their summer home at Ridgecrest as it was located near the large Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly. Perhaps it was fitting that the funeral service was held at the small Community Ridgecrest Baptist Church, which is located in a beautiful mountain setting. The simple but appropriate service was quite moving with the singing of several of Dr. Lawton's favorite hymns including the ever-beautiful "Safe In the Arms of Jesus" by the famed blind hymn-writer, Fannie J. Crosby.

In a beautiful eulogy, Dr. Lawton was referred to as a "statesman and a

Christian" as well as a "statesman and a citizen." The family and admirers of Dr. Lawton were reminded that the beautiful life Dr. Lawton had lived had touched and benefited the lives of thousands of people. Dr. Lawton was laid to rest on the mountain top where other missionaries of the Lawton family lay sleeping. During the last twenty-seven years of Dr. Lawton's life, Aurora occupied an extremely high priority as it was he who founded the organization in 1944. From the outset Dr. Lawton felt that the blind themselves should take the lead in upgrading their own lot. Through personal examples of accomplishments, Dr. Lawton furnished the inspiration for many other blind people to join him in a noble struggle of improving the lives of the blind. In every sense Dr. Lawton was looked upon by both the blind and the sighted public as a man of great stature and integrity. He was a noted educator, having been the co-founder of North Greenville Junior College. He also taught religion in the extension division of the University of South Carolina.

In addition to being a minister and teacher, Dr. Lawton was a well-known lecturer and world traveler. Dr. Lawton still found time to participate in civic activity as he was a member of the Spartanburg Rotary Club. On one occasion, another civic organization, the Sertoma Club, voted him as the man of the year. The life led by Dr. Lawton furnished inspiration for many articles and publications. In his book, "Neither Down Nor Out," the author, Chester E. Swor, wrote as follows:

"In the company of the admirable ones who came into our world bereft of the gift of sight, there is no more heroic

one than Dr. Sam M. Lawton of South Carolina. His academic degrees reveal accomplishments which would have been heroic for the sighted ones of us—Bachelor of Arts, graduate in Theology, Master of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy, the last named degree being the highest academic degree conferred by American universities. All along the way of those arduous and accomplishing years, he did his outstanding work by listening intelligently in classes, by listening carefully as others read to him, and by a skillful use of his typewriter—and do you know who that lovely woman is, standing in the wings, smiling with joy, asking no credit for Dr. Lawton's accomplishments? She is his beloved wife, Alice, who has been to him a masterful mosaic of love, devotion, patience, courage, and helpfulness in a thousand ways. Without her, Dr. Lawton's roster of accomplishments would be shorter in length and less in luster."

While Dr. Lawton will be remembered in many different ways by the many people who knew and admired him in both public and private life, his close associates in Aurora will remember him best for the timeliness of his influence and helpfulness in many challenging Aurora endeavors throughout the years. It was in 1956 that Dr. Lawton provided much needed stability and encouragement for the Aurora organization which had united into a state-wide group and had just voted to affiliate with the National Federation of the Blind. Aurora will remember the stirring speeches made by Dr. Lawton before many legislative groups appealing for much needed benefits and better programs for the state's blind. Today the blind of South Carolina enjoy a better status because of the appearances Dr. Lawton made before legislators who

believed what he said. Many will long remember his eloquent speech on March 9, 1965 to the joint House-Senate hearing held in the Senate chamber on the Commission Bill when he said, "There is nothing well nor fair about the Welfare Department."

Because of his great stature and the high esteem in which he was held, Dr. Lawton was never controversial in work for the blind although he never failed to take a strong stand for those things which he believed. He had the rare quality of always "being there" when he was needed most. Aurora will also remember Dr. Lawton for the many inspiring speeches delivered at Aurora conventions over a fifteen year period. Among his finest speeches is the memorable one delivered in 1964 at the Charleston Convention when the Aurora organization adopted a resolution instructing its officers and board to take the necessary steps to establish a separate agency for the blind. In that speech Dr. Lawton supplied the undergirding encouragement for the Aurora organization to accept the tremendous challenge of convincing and selling the legislature on the idea of divorcing the Division for the Blind from the Welfare Department and establishing a separate agency for the blind.

In 1966 Dr. Lawton was appointed by Governor Robert E. McNair to the board of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind, and he was subsequently elected as its chairman. Until his death Dr. Lawton served as chairman of the Commission. During the infancy of the Commission when there were many trials and tribulations, it was Dr. Lawton's calming influence and understanding which provided much needed stability

which ultimately led to a highly successful program which the Commission presently enjoys. In 1971 it is remembered that Dr Lawton made at least three outstanding speeches at Aurora functions. In January 1971, he spoke to the large gathering at the banquet held at the Aurora Center in honor of Governor Robert E. McNair. In March Dr. Lawton gave the keynote address in the dedicatory services of the newly-expanded Aurora Center of the Blind. And in August, Dr. Lawton spoke to the delegates attending the annual Aurora State Convention in Spartanburg. There is no way to minimize his great loss, but let us all be thankful and grateful that we had the privilege of knowing him and having the joy of sharing the fruits of his labors for mankind. A great humanitarian has departed this life for a higher reward. He is greatly missed but not forgotten. As a tribute to Dr. Lawton, Radio Station WSPA presented the following editorial:

"South Carolina has lost a fine citizen. . . . The blind people of South Carolina have lost a great friend. Dr. Sam Lawton has been called by the One he served so well these 71 years.

Dr. Sam Lawton has been known by radio listeners over the past quarter of a century. Most recently he was heard each Sunday morning with the International Sunday School lesson on WSPA Radio.

Dr. Sam was a remarkable man, his handicap, blindness, did not deter his zest for living, nor his work for the Lord. He treated his handicap as though it did not exist. Dr. Sam turned on the light in a darkened studio to see by. He used his braille watch to keep time on the exacting requirements of a radio show and most times he did it better than those who

could actually see.

His accomplishments had been noted on more than one occasion. 'Man of the Year' awards came his way from the Spartanburg Sertoma Club and the Regional District of Sertoma International and the South Carolina Association of the Blind bestowed upon him the 'Man of the Year for Outstanding Service to the Blind.'

A Baptist missionary to the blind, a former University of South Carolina Professor, Chairman of the South Carolina Blind Commission and Chaplain of the State School for the Deaf and Blind here in Spartanburg for 30 years, were just a few of the tasks he performed.

Dr. Sam Lawton will be missed most by those closest to him, but his passing will leave a void for both the sightless and those who can see. He gave of his time freely and without reservation to those who needed his services. He was living proof that no man has a handicap which he can't overcome. For Dr. Sam Lawton for 71 years was sightless and yet he saw more than those of us who are blessed with two eyes will ever see.

Dr. Sam Lawton, friend, teacher, preacher, humanitarian, has left his world of darkness only to gain eternal light in another world."

WHY A STATE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLIND?

by
Hazel Staley

[Editor's Note: The following paper was delivered at the recent North Carolina

convention.]

The Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind was organized in August, 1969, as an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind. At present we have four chapters—in Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and Charlotte. We hope to get some more chapters going in the near future. Where there is not a sufficient concentration of blind people to form a chapter but where a blind person wishes to join, we accept members-at-large with the same privilege of voting and holding office as regular chapter members.

The purpose of our organization is to promote the social, economic, and general well being of the blind of our State and our Nation—which brings us to the question of why we need an organization of the blind. Our State Commission for the Blind, the Lions Clubs, and others have worked and are still working for the betterment of the blind; so why an organization of the blind?

First of all, we believe that the blind know better than anyone else what their needs are and should, therefore, have a voice in planning programs designed to meet their needs. The programs of the organizations just mentioned are designed and administered, for the most part, by well-meaning sighted people who honestly want to serve blind people but who sometimes, because of a lack of information or because of inaccurate information, make honest mistakes. For example, about a year ago a certain Lions Club took a group of blind people up to Camp Dogwood for a day's outing. Part of the entertainment for the day was playing bingo. And guess what the prizes were—flashlights! Later when one of the

blind guests tactfully suggested to the Lion in charge that perhaps some other type of prize might have been more meaningful to the blind he was at first surprised and then amused at his own foolish error. He had been chairman of his club's sight-saving committee for a long time and thought he knew blind people pretty well. It had never occurred to him that, although a flashlight is invaluable to a sighted person, the blind would have no use for one.

These remarks should in no way be construed as malicious criticism of any group seeking to serve the blind. Our State Commission, the Lions, and others have done much very fine work for the blind and have given service for which we are grateful. The Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind is not a militant organization. Our aim is to improve future service, not to tear down anything that has been accomplished. Labor union members have learned from long experience that the help and assistance usually go to the strong and well organized while the legitimate demands of the weak are often ignored. The Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind is in a position similar to that of a labor union: to secure the best possible for those it represents.

Some agency workers, recognizing the potential of an organization of the blind, have threatened to cut off employment or assistance grants of young blind or newly blind if they join an organization of the blind. I don't know of any such instances in North Carolina, but it has happened in other places. We have been fortunate in having good cooperation from our State agency. Those who have opposed the blind movement have argued that the blind should become integrated

with the sighted world. And they are right. We should—but why can't we do both? We live in an organization-minded society. There are labor unions, manufacturers' associations, fraternal lodges, bridge clubs, women's lib, and so on *ad infinitum*. All kinds of people join together because of some common interest. Imagine trying to sell an avid bridge player on the idea of not joining a bridge club but instead to spend all of his time with golfers or school teachers or radio broadcasters! There are bridge players in all of these groups, but they still enjoy their bridge clubs, too. There is no reason why they can't do both. Neither is integration with sighted people whenever and wherever we have the opportunity any reason for not joining our own organization of the blind. We have many common interests and problems that are not shared by our sighted friends. This is not to say that all blind people are alike, but the fact of blindness does bring about a set of problems and situations which are common to most of us to some extent. Get enough of us together in a group and you are sure to find some who have had considerable success in coping with one or more of these difficulties and others who are baffled and frustrated by them. Mutual exchange of ideas and suggestions in such a group is bound to result in great benefit to all concerned. There are sighted people who claim to know more about what's best for us than we know ourselves, but there can be no real substitute for personal experience. If we can learn to work with sighted individuals and groups whose aims and purposes are similar to ours and at the same time hold fast to our own identity and ideals, we and they will be the better for it and our ends will be achieved more quickly.

This brings us to a second reason for having an organization of the blind, that of educating the public about blindness. We can do a lot of this as individuals, and this approach is very effective as far as it goes; but the trouble is there is such a tremendous amount of it to be done! Even in this day of sophistication and enlightenment and belief in individuality and everybody doing his own thing we are still being told how wonderful it is that we can do simple things like feed and dress ourselves, walk around our homes alone, or wash the dishes—but in the next breath the same person who thought we were so wonderful may still consider us incapable of answering a simple question—you know—"What would she like to drink?" or, "Is he blind?"

While it's up to each one of us to work constantly to clear up misconceptions in the public mind concerning blindness, only an effective organization can make real headway in acquainting the public with our needs and desires as a group—such needs as acceptance as contributing members of society; recognition of the significance of the white cane and of the training necessary for its proper use; elimination of discrimination in housing and employment; adequate financial aid for those unable to obtain gainful employment; a continuing supply of reading matter in forms best adapted to our needs; education and rehabilitation opportunities for children and adults.

Some people have joined an organization of the blind so that they could get to know other blind people and have a little more social life; others have joined to learn what they could do to help blind people; and still others have joined

to learn how they themselves can be helped. There are probably as many different reasons for joining as there are members.

Some blind people say they don't need to join an organization of the blind; they're getting what they want. Fine! But how much of their good fortune is the result of what the organized blind have already accomplished after years of constant struggle? Maybe they don't need our help now, but we'd certainly appreciate theirs in our efforts to help other less fortunate blind people to get what *they* need and want. These successful blind could be living proof to the general public that what we say is true: that blind people, given training and opportunity, can compete well with the sighted, both in job performance and day-to-day living. We have a responsibility for the welfare of all blind people. We owe it to the God who made us to leave the world a little better when we go out of it than it was when we came into it.

There are a few blind people who shy away from any association with other blind people. They kid themselves into believing that they are different; that they are more like the sighted, and being associated with the blind is embarrassing to them. Let's not fool ourselves. If we are blind, everybody knows it, including those who insist that they forget that we're any different from them and that it's simply wonderful that we can dress and feed ourselves and walk around and talk and act just like they do. They aren't really complimenting us. What they are actually saying is that all blind people (including wonderful us—ignoring our individuality, you see) are incapable, immature children who shouldn't be expected to act with

normal intelligence. Those who refuse to acknowledge that they are blind and, therefore, have a problem common to all blind people are perpetuating the myth that is so prevalent in the public mind: that all blind people are eternally immature children, never quite capable of assuming the normal responsibilities of adult citizens.

This is what the Tar Heel State Federation of the Blind is all about: to obtain equality, opportunity, and security for all the blind of North Carolina—equality in education in order that the blind person may take his place in American life; equality in treatment by the government and general public; the opportunity to hold a regular job; the opportunity to take part in American life as full-fledged citizens with the same interests, aims, and dignity as every sighted American; security against hunger and cold, against humiliation and discrimination; the right to stand on his own two feet and make his own way in life.

This is a big task and, admittedly, a difficult one; but if we all strive together cooperatively, if those who have achieved a degree of success will give leadership and the benefit of their experience, we believe that these goals will eventually be achieved.

MORE LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS

For the past few months the *Monitor* has printed documentation concerning the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress—its deteriorating patterns of

service, its failure to be responsive to the wishes of blind people, its lack of communication with regional libraries, and its general indifference to the needs of those it was established to serve. Mr. Mumford, Librarian of Congress, has generally explained every criticism on the grounds that nobody was unhappy except the National Federation of the Blind and its allies. Now, correspondence occurs between Mr. Ralph Garretson of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the Meta-Com company. One wonders whether Meta-Com will be accused of being part of the National Federation of the Blind or one of its allies. The correspondence is self-explanatory. It should occasion thought and reflection—not only on the part of *Monitor* readers but on the part of officials of the Library of Congress as well. Incidentally, our information would indicate that the regional libraries are very well satisfied with Meta-Com and believe its products to be of good quality.

Mr. Phillip Levin
Director of Marketing
Meta-Com, Incorporated

Dear Mr. Levin:

I am in receipt of your cassette sample provided to Mr. Bill West.

Since our program is standardized on a C-90 cassette, custom lengths are impractical. A proliferation of non-standard lengths will further confuse local duplication of cassettes.

Inspection of your sample cassette reveals the following:

1. Splices are poor, allowing adhesive to show between the tape and leader.
2. Roller guides have a considerable amount of untrimmed edge showing at the hubs which would cause binding.

Although I am sure that the tape used is of good audio quality, this cassette would not pass our quality inspection procedures, and I cannot approve it for the above reasons.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph E. Garretson
Technical Officer
[The Library of Congress]

Mr. Garretson:

In your letter of September 22, 1971, you stated;

“Since our program is standardized on a C-90 cassette, custom lengths are impractical. A proliferation of non-standard [lengths] will further confuse local duplication of cassettes.”

This statement appears to signify just the opposite of what the Regional Libraries in general are requesting for three reasons:

1. Among those Libraries ordering cassettes from us, 72% of all the requested volume is for “custom-lengths,” (e.g., C-40, C-80, C-93, etc.).

2. The Libraries tell us either your programs are exceeding 90 minutes or that they prefer an extra one to three minutes of safety time due to cue-in problems, duplicator speed synchronization problems, etc.

3. In addition to the programs coming out in Washington, D.C., many Libraries are duplicating other programs calling for varying lengths.

It appears to us, Mr. Garretson, quite frankly, that your position that "further confusion will occur" is misplaced conjecture based upon a bureaucratic premise not provable among your constituency in the real world. To the contrary, we are now receiving requests daily from both Regional Libraries and educational institutions across the country for "custom-lengths." In fact, it now appears the practicality of matching cassette tape length, the most expensive raw materials in the make-up of a cassette, to program playing time is a fundamentally sound concept. We will continue to offer this service until such time as the Tape Technicians and Librarians tell us they disagree.

We also appreciated your evaluation of our one (1) cassette sample. Under separate cover you will receive additional cassettes for in-depth evaluation.

You mentioned two reasons why our cassettes would not pass your personal inspection. That is, "poor splicing" and "untrimmed edges on the roller guides." The following comments seem to be in order.

1. We utilize an automatic splicing system at Meta-Com. The likelihood of

machine error, adhesive showing through splice, is 1:500 or once every 250 cassettes. While I admit the probability exists, we can assure you our quality control techniques minimize this possibility even further.

2. A close evaluation of the internal components in a Meta-Com cassette should eliminate all questions related to reliability. We would be pleased to match the duplicator reliability of this plastic against any other commercially available cassette within the price range under discussion. Without exception, a close evaluation will demonstrate the equal or better concept. Do check with one of the Libraries yourself to find out just how many cassettes out of 1,000 fail. *The answer will be less than 10 units due to cassette failure.*

Your final point referred to the magnetic tape housed in the Meta-Com plastic shell. You stated;

"Although I am sure that the tape used is of good audio quality, this cassette would not pass our quality inspection procedures, and I can not approve it for the above reasons."

I remain absolutely astounded by this remark. It is inconceivable to me that a Tape Technician of your stature would completely avoid evaluation of the magnetic tape. The quality of the magnetic tape is equally important in our opinion to the plastic housing, even in straight narrative usage. In addition, if in your opinion the plastic shell was unacceptable, would it not follow that the magnetic tape was equally bad?

The main reason, however, for

writing you today is not due to your evaluation of one blank cassette. We reject that superficial evaluation unequivocally. Meta-Com, Mr. Garretson, is a very small cassette company in comparison to any other you have dinner with; in fact, we probably could not afford a luncheon. It is only because of our "custom-length" innovation that we are able to compete in the marketplace effectively against the giant manufacturers. We are fulfilling a need with "in-cassette duplicators" that the consumer, mass-market orientated giants prefer to ignore. Thus, in your reply, I suggest that you address yourself to two points in particular:

1. Evaluate the cassettes arriving under separate cover. Then, based upon an in-depth analysis, report those findings to me as well as to every Regional Library with your recommendations.

2. I am expecting a personal apology from you for demeaning our services and cassette product on no less than two occasions in the past three months. The recent Milwaukee Regional Meeting is one example of your personal attempt to persuade Librarians not to try our services.

Word-of-mouth, Mr. Garretson, can become an insidious thing if left uncorrected. While our cassettes are proving reliable to the Regional Libraries using them, your recent tactics and genuine influence is having an even greater negative affect on earnings here.

I am sure that you are not intentionally trying to keep our services out of the Blind and Physically Handicapped market. Possibly another technician was responsible for the first evaluation process. Whatever the reasons, I

insist that this controversy be settled quickly. We are a young, growing company; we cannot afford customer losses unless deserved. . . . especially when gains seem to be in order.

May I expect an early reply?

James I. McCann, President
META-COM, INC.

WORKSHOPS FOR BLIND BECOME PRIVATE FIRMS

[Editor's Note: For more than 80 years the State of California has operated workshops for blind persons. At first the governing body was a board of directors of the Industrial Home for the Adult Blind; then the Department of Institutions took over, followed by the Department of Education. For the past eight years the sheltered shops have been under the management of the State Department of Rehabilitation. During all of this time the administration of these agencies has, on balance, left much to be desired. Wages were generally very low and the flow of work most uneven. However, over the years the National Federation of the Blind of California has through strenuous legislative effort won significant benefits for the workers—such things as recognition of the union for collective bargaining; health insurance with a major portion of the premiums paid by the State; unemployment compensation; Social Security coverage; State disability insurance; sick leave; and paid vacations. During the 1971 session of the Legislature the State Department of Rehabilitation introduced a bill to permit it to transfer all of the sheltered shops to a private

corporation. The NFB of California agreed, provided that all of the hard-won benefits were to be continued, and succeeded in amending the bill to this effect. It will be noted that the chairman of the California Industries for the Blind Corporation is Anthony G. Mannino, President of the NFB of California, which augurs well for the success of the new venture. The NFB's Sheltered Shop Employees Division is seeking to bring similar benefits and protections to workers in shops in other States.

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Six state-operated workshops for the blind were transferred to private non-profit corporations Monday, completing Governor Reagan's program to purchase rehabilitative services instead of operating facilities.

Robert E. Howard, director of the Department of Rehabilitation, told newsmen at ceremonies in Los Angeles that the transfer was "in keeping with our focus of purchasing services from the private sector rather than providing them."

The six shops, which have been operated by the state for 80 years to provide employment and training to blind persons, included plants in Los Angeles, Berkeley, San Diego and San Jose. They operated under the titles of California Industries for the Blind and Opportunity Work Center.

The program in San Jose was transferred to Goodwill Industries of Santa Clara County. The other five plants

were deeded to a newly formed corporation, California Industries for the Blind, Inc.

Anthony G. Mannino, president of the National Federation of the Blind in California, is chairman of the board of directors of the new corporation.

The nonprofit group was created with a \$300,000 loan from Wells Fargo Bank and a federal grant. The workshops specialize in light production work that can be performed by the blind and other handicapped persons. About 250 persons are employed in the plants.

Howard said the state also intends to contract with the organization to train disabled blind persons, as is done with other workshops in the state.

All state property is deeded to the corporation but the transfer of ownership will not be effective for five years during which the state will monitor the operations, Howard said.

At the Los Angeles workshop, 840 Santee Street, which will serve as headquarters of the corporation, Howard presented the deeds to Mannino and then read a letter from Governor Reagan to 50 assembled blind workers.

MEET OUR STATE PRESIDENT-ARCHIE ERICKSON AND MEET ONE OF OUR MINNESOTA AFFILIATES

Early on a cold winter's morn in the year 1905 the usual quiet tranquility of a humble back-woods farmstead was aroused by a shrill, high-pitched squawk heralding the arrival of a new son to the Olaf Ericksons. In those good old days the addition of another son to a farm family, you know, was usually cause for rejoicing. But alas! their jubilation was destined to be short lived when in a few months the Ericksons discovered that their little boy, Archie B. (for Bernard), was incurably blind; good for not much more than maybe lugging in wood and water, they thought.

At any rate, the story of me is not impressive or even important apart from my active and devoted association with the Minnesota Organization of Blind for the past forty years of my life. Biographically speaking, suffice it to say that I attended the Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School, graduating in 1925 all fired up with idealistic ambitions to really go places; so I settled for a fairly lucrative career as custom piano tuner-technician and musician-entertainer, with the past eleven years spent as official tuner for the Minneapolis Public School system. While I have recently retired from the "school rat race," I seem to be busier than ever, although principally with MOB involvements.

Our organization, presently in its

fifty-second year of history, often referred to as the "original White Cane organization," can truthfully be credited with pioneering efforts in a number of areas. We were first in this State to initiate and sponsor welfare legislation for the blind; first to establish a bi-monthly publication in both Braille and ink-print, the well known "Minnesota Bulletin," now in its 37th year and still growing in its coverage of matters of concern to the blind of Minnesota; first in the establishment of



a home and general service center for the blind which first opened its doors for service in October of 1929. In our boarding home with accommodations for about thirty residents, we cater mainly to middle-aged or elderly blind folk who must be capable of caring for themselves, while at the same time we encourage community integration on the part of young blind. We are strategically situated midway between Minneapolis and St. Paul on five spacious acres of grounds which have been beautifully adapted and equipped for varied outdoor recreation. Well, it's a funny thing, but no matter how we juggle the figures, we always seem to finish out each fiscal year with a three to five thousand dollar deficit which somehow must be made up. But then after all we are supposed to be a non-profit operation which leads us to a brief word on organization financing and how do we do it?

An on-the-streets white cane sales campaign conducted by our own volunteer workers is one way employed by MOB since 1942 which last year yielded us approximately \$3000 from Minneapolis and St. Paul. Another way we have is the regular and systematic solicitation of private individuals, business firms, and foundations which has proven very productive of good fundraising results during the past five or six years. However, due to the untimely death of our ace fundraiser, Phillip Houghtelin, this dependable source of funds has suffered a most lamentable setback.

The loyal, hard-working women of our group would never forgive me if I should fail to give their grand Guild at least a passing honorable mention here. Heaven knows they deserve a heap more than that for their continuous unflinching efforts over the past twenty-four years to supply many needs of the Home such as linens, equipment replacements, and paint. This they accomplish through two or three special fundraising affairs annually.

In our earlier years of formative history we became what you might call a traditionally strongly metro-centered organization. In more recent years, due in very large measure to the contagious compelling influence of NFB, tremendous pressures have been building up within demanding that we extend and expand a more effective statewide outreach. As a result, we have the newly formed Central Minnesota Chapter, centered in St. Cloud, which is off to a fine start; the recently reactivated Arrowhead Chapter of Duluth, which is again going great guns; and then, let's not forget our "up and at'em" Student Division, MOB and NFB which boasts a membership of over fifty. Then

add to this our deep involvement with the organized blind of the area to gain adequate representation on the governing local boards of agencies like the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, and we believe we have combined ingredients of an unbeatable force for the good of all the blind of Minnesota.

Ah yes, thinking back to 1938 and 1939, when last I served as president, how relatively uncomplicated things were then.

A SPECIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE BLIND

by
Edward J. Grenier, Jr.

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Montgomery County (Maryland) *Sentinel*.]

I wish to cite a type of discrimination that exists in our society and is generally overlooked by the media. Our daughter is a healthy, bright, normal girl of 12 who happens to be blind. She is now in the seventh grade at a private school, where all of the other children are sighted. Throughout her entire schooling, she has been granted no concessions, has had the same textbooks as everyone else (but in Braille), and has taken the same examinations as everyone else. She has consistently been at or very near the top of her class academically.

Several weeks ago, she went with several members of her Girl Scout Troop (all of whom are sighted) to attend a course in fire prevention and safety and child care given by the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department in

Silver Spring. The course involves skills and knowledge which every young girl wants to have--and which a normal blind girl perhaps needs even more than a normal sighted girl. Our daughter has thoroughly enjoyed the course and has learned a great deal of information from it, for which we are grateful.

Unfortunately, it did not come to the attention of the Fire Department that our daughter is blind until she had been in the course (and had participated actively through questions and comments) for several weeks. The board of the department, after some discussion, decided that our daughter would not be permitted to take the final exam and, if she passed, to obtain a certificate of completion like the rest of the girls in the class. The sole reason given to us for this decision was that our daughter is blind, and quite a bit of visual material was used in the course of the class presentations. The board could not understand how a blind girl could take its written examination.

We and several professionals in the area of teaching the blind attempted, to no avail, to explain to the department officials that the examination could very easily be transcribed into Braille and that our daughter was quite capable of taking the examination along with everyone else. Alternatively, we suggested that she might have the questions read to her and thus take the test orally. We explained that we were not looking for any concessions, but merely desired to have her have the same opportunity as the other girls, that is, to take the examination and to pass or fail like the rest.

We realize that the board's decision is

final and that our daughter will not be permitted to take the examination. I am writing in the hope that you will somehow bring to the community's attention the fact that normal blind people frequently attain levels of very superior achievement in their chosen fields and that such persons should be given the same rights and opportunities as sighted people with similar qualifications. We have an outstanding example of achievement by a blind person right in the Washington Metropolitan Area. An outstanding blind scientist was selected as one of the ten outstanding young men of the year in 1969. And I could cite other such examples.

Indeed, our own daughter, even at the young age of 12, has demonstrated an ability to perform satisfactorily not merely in academic pursuits (which involve the taking of examinations much more complicated than the examination in the department's course), but also in such extracurricular activities as Girl Scout badge work and camping, Red Cross swimming courses, etc. In fact, some time ago she completed all the requirements of a Red Cross swimming course and received the appropriate certificate.

We realize that the board's action was based upon an unfortunate ignorance of the true facts, and we hope that this letter will serve to avoid such unfortunate misunderstandings in the future.

* * * * *

MIKE LONGSTREET;
BLINDED BY THEATRICAL LICENSE
by

Robert and Ruth Acosta

Each Thursday night Mike Longstreet, blind insurance investigator, is watched by countless viewers as he proclaims through word and deed that he is blind. With barking dog or beeping cane we follow him as he shoots at his victims, purposefully missing them by inches. He assesses the size and contents of a room merely with the snap of a finger. Learning karate, he then challenges his opponent to a "High Noon" type battle to the death. Then our *blind* superman eats a dog biscuit instead of a cookie. Supposedly Mr. Longstreet, who was recently blinded, has undergone instant rehabilitation at an orientation center in the New Orleans area.

The West Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of California was concerned, not only with Mr. Longstreet's actions but with the lines of the script showing his true feelings about his blindness--dooming him to live a less than manly life. He overcompensates by intentionally getting into physical combat each week. It was because of this concern about the image of the blind that the West Valley Chapter invited Mr. Joel Rogosin, producer of the series, to a chapter meeting.

Mr. Rogosin began by explaining his exposure to blindness--a corneal transplant. His chief object of research was a Southern California agency specializing in work with blind children. This agency stresses independence yet de-emphasizes the use of the white cane.

Mr. Rogosin's ideal of the truly independent blind person is exemplified in the actions of a noted jazz singer "a truly amazing man" who performed such feats as getting around his house without the aid of a cane or a guide dog, determining the size, shape, and contents of a room simply by listening to people's voices and snapping his fingers. To top it all off, he drives his own car in his own driveway.

However, when Bob Acosta, the president of the West Valley Chapter, began questioning him on the basis of this research, the man became openly hostile. He stated that we were victims of sighted prejudice regarding the abilities of the blind. Furthermore, the possible becomes the probable through the use of theatrical license. He went on to say that since we were blind we were not in a position to fully evaluate the show since we could not see what was going on.

He accused us of being supersensitive when we vigorously objected to certain lines in the script. The public is constantly reminded of the fact that Longstreet is blind with such phrases as "Why would any man want to fight with a blind man?" and "Are you afraid of a blind man's cane?" The Chapter was especially critical of Longstreet's explanation of his adjustment to blindness as an illusion of acceptance, which can be found in the lines "I put up one hell of a front." When a sighted member corroborated our appraisal of the show Mr. Rogosin became angry and interrupted her to inform us that the object of this series was to make money and he implied that he really did not care what we as the organized blind had to say about the program as long as the ratings held up. If the image of blind people suffered because of this program it

was just too bad. He tried to console us by telling us that the general public had a better understanding of blind people because of this show.

When a member of the Chapter asked why a blind person was not employed on this TV series, he said that he knew of no qualified blind actors who could withstand the pressures of television. He went on to say that he had worked with some blind actors in San Francisco whom he found to be lacking in qualifications. Our response was that a blind actor could not become qualified if shows like his were not willing to give us experience. He retorted that we were no different from the Chicanos or the Blacks, that there were very few good minority actors. However, he said, if he would have known of a qualified blind actor he would have been "sorely tempted to consider hiring one." A number of members asked why he had not contacted the National Federation of the Blind for some advice on the production of the program. Mr. Rogosin claimed he had never heard of the NFB until invited to appear before the West Valley Chapter.

Mr. Rogosin excused himself of all errors in the portrayal of a blind man in the interest of production costs and haste to get the shows produced. His attitude conveyed to us the impression that though the public is getting a second-rate, slipshod view of blindness, they don't know any better, and the blind be damned. This is television, and theatrical license supercedes all.

What impressions would the average member of the public get about blind people from watching "Longstreet"? He would see this composite blind man bound on to the stage with his white guide dog,

who not only guides but barks, jumps, protects him, and gets stabbed all in one program. Such actions are frowned upon by all reputable guide dog schools. Although the beeping cane was discontinued quite early in the series, Longstreet still relies on other gimmicks and gadgets to carry out the every day functions of life. In future shows Longstreet will utilize such other theatrical devices as batting a beeping ball, telling the colors with one's fingers, and will even be carted away for readjustment by a special psychiatrist for the blind.

How will the use of these devices affect the employment opportunities for the blind? Who would hire a blind person who must rely on ill-behaved barking dogs and beeping apparatuses? Those of us in the National Federation of the Blind would rather stress the normalcy of blindness through the use of reasonable alternative techniques which do not include such obvious theatrical gimmicks as the above. Perhaps the mistaking of a dog biscuit for a cookie can best explain Mr. Rogosin's view of the blind. He saw this as a funny stunt but the blind people at that meeting saw it as a tragic flaw.

Mr. Joel Rogosin, Producer
Longstreet Show
Paramount TV Studios
5451 Marathon
Hollywood, California

Dear Mr. Rogosin:

On behalf of the West Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of California I would like to thank you so much for your presentation before our

organization at our December meeting. However, I personally found our discussion to be most disappointing, not because of your lack of candor regarding our thoughts on the *Longstreet Show*, but because you fail to truly understand the philosophy which is the cornerstone of the National Federation of the Blind. I shall try once more to explain our point of view.

We of the NFB believe in the normalcy of people who are blind. The men and women who comprise our organization represent a cross section of American society. For too long, we have been portrayed by the media as either supermen or as boobs, simply on the basis of blindness. Those of us in the National Federation of the Blind believe blindness to be no more than the inability to see.

At our December meeting, you presented me with a script of a future show in which Longstreet regresses after Nickie is involved in an automobile accident. At that time you warned us that we would probably dislike it very much, and you were indeed correct. As we read the script, Nickie is dying in a hospital while everyone else is feeling sorry for Mike Longstreet as he sulks in his room like a spoiled child. He is feeling sorry for himself not because of Nickie's critical condition, but because he is blind. Next, Duke calls Dr. Stockton, the staff psychiatrist at the Foundation for the Junior Blind which is, in real life, an agency for young people up to the age of 21. Dr. Stockton says that he will take Mike back to his clinic for readjustment whether he wants to go or not. I wonder, is it necessary for a blind person to be carted off to an institution for the blind every time he suffers severe depression?

I do not intend to analyze the entire play for you, but we were indeed aware of such stage instructions which tell the cameraman to "focus on Longstreet's blind eyes." And yet, you were the one who assured us that blindness was a mere by-product of the show and that you would be emphasizing Longstreet the man.

Mr. Rogosin, you may make a great deal of money from this show at the expense of thousands of blind people. You may even talk yourself into thinking that you are performing a great service for us, but in my opinion, you are doing quite the contrary. True, you are displaying blindness to the American public, but I wonder, is the price—the loss of our dignity—worth it?

You tell us that the public does not care whether you produce a show which is technically quite inaccurate. But is this really true? How many employers will hire a qualified blind person after viewing Longstreet's theatrical antics for the past few months? How many employers would tolerate the use of the various gimmicks and gadgets which Longstreet has depended upon in the past?

You may consider me to be both negative and supersensitive on this entire subject. If so, it is because many of the things which you, in your ignorance, have inflicted upon us and which affects every blind man and woman in this country who desires to be treated with dignity and who wants to educate the public to believe that blindness is nothing but a mere nuisance provided that the blind person receives the proper training.

I am sending this script to the President of the National Federation of

the Blind, who is the director of the finest agency for the blind in this nation. Perhaps he will choose to enlighten you further on our philosophy of blindness.

Very truly yours,

Robert Acosta, President of the
West Valley Chapter of the
National Federation of the Blind
of California

PROPOSED "OFFICE FOR THE HANDICAPPED"

[Editor's Note: On February 9, 1972, Senator Harrison Williams, Jr., for himself and Senators Jennings Randolph, Claiborne Pell, Edward Kennedy, Gaylord Nelson, Walter Mondale, Thomas Eagleton, Alan Cranston, Harold Hughes, Adlai Stevenson, Jacob Javits, Richard Schweiker, Bob Packwood, J. Glenn Beall, and Robert Stafford, introduced S. 3158. This bill would establish an Office for the Handicapped. At the same time Senator Williams introduced Senate Joint Resolution 202 "to express the sense of Congress that a White House Conference on the Handicapped be called by the President of the United States." His statement, as it appears in the *Congressional Record*, upon introduction of these proposals follows:]

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. President, I am today introducing several proposals--which I first announced two weeks ago--which will change this Nation's commitment to the handicapped, and will help us achieve the tragically overdue goal of full integration of the handicapped into normal community living, working, and

service patterns.

First, I am proposing the creation of an Office of the Handicapped in the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to coordinate that Department's many programs for the handicapped. Second, I am proposing the authorization of funds for a White House Conference on the Handicapped to bring visibility to the very real problems of these citizens. Finally, last week, as chairman of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, I created a Subcommittee on the Handicapped to make very clear the Senate's and the committee's commitment to the handicapped.

These are wide-ranging proposals. They call upon every aspect of Federal, State, and local government to reexamine and reevaluate its commitment to the physically and mentally disabled. They come at a time when many of the programs existing for the handicapped are fulfilling their piecemeal goals. They come at a time when we can say that we have made some progress in dealing with the awesome and myriad problems that this group faces in our advancing society. And they come out of sad recognition that many of the problems are not being dealt with in a satisfactory way.

The neglect of the handicapped is a stain on our collective conscience; an affront to what this great Nation is supposed to stand for. I think that we have not yet come to realize what it means to be handicapped in this society.

The handicapped live among us. They have the same hopes, the same fears, and the same ambitions as the rest of us. They are children and adults, black and white,

men and women, rich and poor. They have problems as varied as their individual personalities. Yet, they are today a hidden population because their problems are different from most of ours. Only the bravest risk the dangers and suffer the discomforts and humiliations they encounter when they try to live what we consider to be normal, productive lives. In their quest to achieve the benefits of our society they ask no more than equality of opportunity. But they are faced with continuing discrimination. Discrimination in access to public transportation and public communication facilities because they cannot make use of more normal modes. Discrimination in pursuing advanced education because they are often excluded from education altogether. Discrimination because they do not have the simplest forms of special educational and rehabilitation services they need to develop to their fullest capacity.

Today, there are 7 million handicapped children in this Nation. Sixty percent of these children are denied the special educational assistance that they need to have full equality of opportunity. A full one million of these children are excluded entirely from public schools and do not go through the learning process with their peers. Only 40 percent of America's handicapped children receive compensatory education and these services vary widely within the 50 states. In most cases, special programs are provided only if the local community is able to support such services entirely by themselves; we are least likely to find special services in areas of population growth. More tragically, special services and education for the handicapped are the first programs to be done away with during times of economic adversity. In a very real sense,

whether a handicapped person receives this kind of attention depends on where he lives—not on his particular disability.

In the 1968-69 school year, there were 19 States where less than 31 percent of the handicapped population was served by special classes. In 11 States, less than 20 percent of the population was served. Only seven States out of the 50 provide for more than 51 percent of the handicapped population. And we find greater disparities as we look at particular kinds of disabilities. For instance, in 30 States less than 11 percent of the emotionally disturbed population is served.

Let us, for a moment, look further into the problems in educating the handicapped. How many of these children will grow up with no compensatory services? How many of those who are now adults grew up with little or no access to formal education? How many were unable to secure the special services which are their basic birthright? How many as a result of our ignorance and our procrastination are left with wasted potential and unfulfilled lives because we have not been willing to provide basic services that they could have used when they were young?

The answers to these questions are appalling.

According to the best figures I can find, there are more than 22 million adults in the United States with physical handicaps severe enough to limit in some way their ability to work. There are more than 5.6 million persons of all ages who are mentally retarded, some proportion of which are adults. Of the 22 million with

physical disabilities, an estimated 14 million could work if given the opportunity. And of the 5.6 million who are mentally retarded, 9 out of 10 could work if given proper training and rehabilitation.

Actual employment figures are not so positive. Again, according to the best estimates I could find:

There are about 150,000 blind persons of working age in this country. About 50,000 of them are employed.

Of the 60,000 paraplegics of working age, 47 percent are employed.

Of the 400,000 epileptics of working age, the employment rate, according to best estimates, is between 15 percent and 25 percent.

And of the 200,000 persons of working age with cerebral palsy, only a handful are employed.

These figures only account for a little over 800,000 of the 22 million adults with physical handicaps. Other sources that I have examined have wildly differing statistics, including in some cases percentages for employment that are completely the reverse of those noted above. Even HEW cannot fully enumerate or locate the handicapped.

The fact that this population is not accounted for accurately or consistently is shocking. I think I know some of the reasons for this. The data is collected for diverse purposes. Some figures include those with chronic diseases; some do not. Some figures only reflect those who are handicapped and are served by Federal

Government programs. Some figures originate from an estimated number of handicapping conditions—not handicapped individuals, handicapping conditions.

The individuality of the people with these conditions has been lost somewhere in the process. We have lost track of them, lost the reality of their lives, and the pain and suffering of their disabilities.

In 1966, there were 51 programs for the handicapped in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which included some aspect of assistance in meeting the problems of the handicapped. There were seven programs in the Office of Education, 14 in Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, 15 in the Public Health Service, one in the Social Security Administration, 10 in the Welfare Administration and four in other agencies. Both funding and programs have increased since that point in time.

I do not question the need for the services that these programs provide, nor the quality of programs that are being operated. I question, however, whether these initiatives are adequately responding to the needs and wants of handicapped persons in our society. The sheer diversity and separateness of the programs, the unreliability of the statistics and the lack of information on accomplishments for the adult handicapped population suggests in a very crude way that we are not. And if the situation of handicapped adults in our society at all parallels that information that we have on the handicapped among our children, we know that they are not. All the children that we excluded from education years ago are the adult handicapped population today. Their problems have not gone although we have

lost sight of them.

It cannot be a question of the costs.

It would save us money to save the lives that we are wasting. According to data for 1966, \$3.5 billion was obligated for the handicapped by the Federal Government. Of this money, \$2.65 billion was for income maintenance. Furthermore, it is estimated that the annual cost of foster care for children is about one-eighth of what it costs for institutionalization. The lifetime cost of educating an educable handicapped or retarded child is about \$20,000. The lifetime cost of institutionalization will cost well over \$200,000. These figures do not even take into consideration the potential earning power of these individuals, if they receive the special education and other services necessary for them to realize their personal and economic potential.

Yet, in 1970 out of a total of \$38.5 billion in Federal, State, and local dollars spent on public elementary and secondary education, approximately \$1.4 billion of that money was spent on the handicapped. This figure is well under their fair share which would be ten percent to 12 percent of total moneys. It does not even come close to the kind of investment we should be making.

The paradox of our national behavior is that we, simultaneously, do too much and too little. Too many of our handicapped population are misdiagnosed, mislabeled, and hustled out of schools, jobs, and other institutions of society. They are tested with instruments that are either not relevant or sensitive to their varied backgrounds. They are left with

little if any compensatory services, and little followup; an unfortunate label with a rigid tracking system. And we come to a point, as we have just seen with the adult handicapped population, where we cannot even identify the individuals we have swept out of our society. They are invisible, but for the families and friends who know them. Their spirits are irreparably damaged.

To a great extent, this paradox is based on a failure to recognize the intrinsic rights of the handicapped. For too long, we have been dealing with them out of charity, something that we can do when we have enough time, and enough extra money. This approach has long outlasted its usefulness. The mere fact that services for those who are handicapped are considered frills of governmental budgets that are cut in times of economic adversity underlines a tragedy of our society. This is medieval treatment for a very current problem.

Today, many people fail to understand that educational programming and training for the handicapped works; that the deaf, the blind and the retarded can learn and can, in fact, become productive members of society. Most of us see the handicapped only in terms of stereotypes that are relevant for extreme cases. This ancient attitude is in part the result of the historical separation of our handicapped population. We have isolated them so that they have become unknown to the communities and individuals around them.

Clearly, we need to reevaluate our national policy and national programming toward the handicapped. In order to alleviate many of their problems we need

an increased national commitment, and we need it now. Some of the ingredients of this new commitment will have to include strengthened national leadership, greatly increased visibility for the problems of the handicapped, and integrated and consistent programming. Foremost in this commitment should be immediate reexamination of educational policies, and continuing training and education of adults.

It is for these reasons that I make these proposals today. As chairman of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, I believe it is time that we revise the way that the Congress looks at problems of the handicapped. For many years, we have been doing this in a piecemeal fashion through separate Subcommittees on Labor, on Education, on Health, and on Handicapped Workers. And we have seen many fine accomplishments during this time period.

Senator PELL, as chairman of the Education Subcommittee, has shown deep devotion to solving the problems of providing vitally needed special educational services for handicapped children. Indeed, he has been a leader in this effort. Senator RANDOLPH has shown his firm commitment to assuring that handicapped workers are given new and meaningful opportunities to secure the kinds of jobs which they are best suited for. Senator KENNEDY has through the years demonstrated his real concern for the mentally retarded. He has consistently supported all congressional efforts to provide greater opportunities for the handicapped.

But with all of this fine work, it is my view that we have come to a point in

time when we must revise this piecemeal method of separate subcommittees and individual efforts in order to deal with the problems of the handicapped in a way that is comprehensive. We must look for the full integration of all the handicapped into all aspects of our society.

For this reason, I last week established a permanent subcommittee of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee to be known as the Subcommittee on the Handicapped. To do this, I have reconstituted the Subcommittee on Handicapped Workers.

Senator RANDOLPH has agreed to serve as the chairman of this subcommittee and Senators PELL and KENNEDY will also bring their expertise to this body. This will provide a congressional channel that will act as a full-time oversight and legislative panel to deal with all of the problems that the handicapped must face, including the myriad Federal programs in HEW.

There are alternate ways within a legislative body that we might consider for dealing with the problems of the handicapped. I have established a permanent subcommittee within the committee of which I am chairman because I want to make very clear that I believe that something must be done, and it must be done now before more lives are wasted; more dreams shattered; more hopes destroyed. This is a commitment that I am making to the Congress and to the entire Nation. But most important, it is a commitment that I am making to the handicapped.

Second, I am introducing a bill which will create within the Office of the

Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare an Office of the Handicapped. This Office will be charged with coordinating all programs for the handicapped within the Department. It will advise the Secretary on policy and administration related to these programs, and will serve as a focal point for information related to the Department's programs for the handicapped. While I recognize many programs outside of the Department provide services to the handicapped, this Office will be a beginning.

The effective coordination of Federal programs serving the handicapped has critical significance in attaining the objectives of many legislative proposals enacted by Congress.

In recent years Congress has authorized many new statutes designed to improve the educational services available to handicapped children; assist local communities to construct facilities for service programs directed at the needs of the handicapped; support research to uncover the causes of handicapping conditions; and provide medical, educational and behavioral diagnoses so that effective life planning for the handicapped might be undertaken. None of these programs attain their full objectives as long as they remain isolated, single efforts. Only when they are coordinated can they focus on the total needs of the handicapped.

Of course, organizational structures are not ends in themselves—they are not panaceas for all our bureaucratic problems. And, they certainly do not take the place of innovative programs and ideas which will bring the handicapped into full

participation in this Nation. But a coordinating structure such as the one I shall propose is a vital first step in the development of a total Federal program with the necessary range, comprehensiveness and impact demanded by the handicapped.

As a third step, I am introducing a resolution calling upon the President to convene a White House Conference on the Handicapped. This Conference will concentrate the attention of all concerned organizations, governmental and private, on the handicapped and their place in our society. It will provide a forum in which all concerned persons can together plan a set of goals and establish a realistic timetable for achieving them. It will also offer an opportunity for a critical review and reexamination of where we stand. Only through such a national endeavor can the necessary resources be marshalled to attack the problems which the handicapped face every day.

The call for a White House Conference on the Handicapped is a response to the call of the handicapped themselves. They ask for recognition, for their rightful place in our Nation's life, and for a fair share of our resources. It is time that we provide them with that recognition and a forum with sufficient visibility and national prominence so they are no longer a minority lost within this Nation.

In addition to these actions, I will be introducing in the next few weeks a number of substantive programs which will begin to deal immediately with specific areas where we know that special programming is needed.

We cannot sit back any longer knowing that one million children in this country are excluded from the educational system and receive no education at all—knowing that 60 percent of all the handicapped children are denied the special services they need to have an equal chance to live freely in this Nation—and knowing that these children will grow up to be handicapped adults lost somewhere within this Nation. We cannot and must not look upon these individual tragedies with an attitude of business as usual.

I wish it to be said of America in the 1970's that when its attention at last returned to domestic needs, it made a strong and new commitment to equal opportunity and equal justice under law; a commitment, in fact, to compassion. The handicapped are one part of our Nation that have been denied these fundamental rights for too long. It is time for the Congress and the Nation to assure that these rights are no longer denied.

* * * * *

BLIND TEACHER OF ELECTRONICS

by
Alfred E. Clark

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Milton Liljestrand, slender and silver-haired, walked briskly into his class in advanced electronics technology and erased the blackboard.

"Mr. Liljestrand," a student called out, "The blackboard is clean." The teacher put down the eraser and removed from his pocket a bag of magnetic disks, pieces of chalk of various colors and

lengths and yard-long knotted string.

The 64-year-old instructor, who will retire from his staff post at the RCA Institutes next year after teaching more than 20,000 students since 1945, is totally blind. His present students, a number of them from foreign countries, watched attentively as the teacher placed 40 magnets, each the size of a copper penny, on the steel board. Using the string with its measured series of knots, Mr. Liljestrand drew an intricate diagram to represent a schematic plan for a basic meter to measure electrical current.

He often constructs complex electronic diagrams on the blackboard and uses sophisticated instruments to demonstrate to his students electronic principles in the laboratory. Using his small magnets and the length of knotted string, Mr. Liljestrand produces schematic diagrams that would be difficult for anyone to draw without frequent references to a chart. Using a variation of this technique, he also spins out complicated mathematical equations.

During laboratory sessions, Mr. Liljestrand often will wheel around an oscilloscope, twist a few dials and then describe to his students what they see on the oscilloscope television-like screen. In one classroom session last week he directed the students to work out an equation while he followed their suggestions on an oversized slide rule as he studied the problem in a handbook written in Braille.

His eyesight was seriously impaired in an industrial accident in Galveston, Texas, in 1928 when a quantity of sulphur dioxide exploded in his face during a

laboratory test. He had very limited vision, and in hope of regaining his sight, he underwent a transplant operation in 1938.

During World War II he taught radio communications to members of the American Women's Voluntary Services and many became commercial radio operators. "When I came to the institutes in 1945," he said, "I still could make out my writing on the blackboard and get about but my eyesight was completely gone by 1957," he recalled.

Mr. Liljestrang was born in McPherson, Kansas, but grew up in Texas, where he received a degree in electrical engineering from Rice Institute in Houston. He said that when he retires from his teaching post, he will return to school to continue advance mathematical studies. He lives with his wife in Greenwich Village and recalled that when the RCA Institutes—which now is at 320 West 21st Street—was housed on West Fourth Street, "I used to just walk around the corner to the job." Now he travels mostly by cab.

The original concept of the RCA Institutes was to train wireless operators, but in the last 60 years it has evolved into one of the major electronic schools in the country. The institutes have about 3,500 students in day and evening sessions and enroll 900 foreign students from 64 countries.

* * * * *

MINNESOTA CONVENTION

by
Rosemary Varey

The semi-annual meeting of the

Minnesota Organization of the Blind held late last fall indicated that our conventions are getting bigger and better each year. This is due in part to the formation of a new chapter, the Central Minnesota Chapter, the reinstated Arrowhead Chapter, and surely to our Student Division which has now reached a membership of approximately 55. They are an up and coming group and we wish to commend them on their various projects and programs. We look for some of them to become future officers and directors of our organization and we owe them our help and support.

As the prime purpose of one session was to hear reports from four panelists whose discussion pertained to the activities which had developed during the past months between the organized blind of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, it was moved and carried that we become a committee of the whole. The first speaker on the panel was Jim Brennan, who reviewed how this situation first began, the list of grievances submitted and reported on the first meeting with the MSB personnel. A second panelist, Jim Lukasavitz, spoke on the first public hearing held at the Society and the outcome and consequences which preceded, such as press coverage, exchange of correspondence, and submission of names presented to serve on the MSB board. Ivan Roelofs, as third panelist, talked about why we want representation on the MSB board, and the position paper which had been prepared and which would be presented. As the final panelist, Joyce Hoffa, remarked on why we are undertaking these various projects and positions with the Society, stressing the fact that blind and visually handicapped people can and must speak for themselves,

make their own decisions, and so on.

Following these reports, questions raised by members from the floor were duly answered by those on the panel. Torger Lien was commended for doing such a fine job as parliamentarian and moderator of this committee. Action was taken to support the Grievance Committee in actions taken so far in the MSB situation and to adopt the position paper of the committee.

Several resolutions of importance to internal housekeeping matters were adopted. Among other resolutions considered and acted upon was SA-71-04 which deals with DPW Rule 54 which states that the Commissioner of Public Welfare has ruled that a ceiling of \$15,000 be placed on the equity in a homestead owned by any recipient or aid to the blind. Action of the Special Legislature charged the Commissioner of Public Welfare with the responsibility of enforcing Rule 54 only in the event that federal funding of the AB program be jeopardized by failing to place the above-mentioned ceiling in the AB law and the Commissioner has failed to carry out the intent of the State Legislature by neglecting to challenge the Department of HEW. This resolution resolved that the Legislative Committee be instructed to take all legal action necessary and proper to prevent the DPW from complying with DPW Rule 54 and to solicit the cooperation of other organizations of the blind in Minnesota to achieve this objective. Another resolution seeks the support of the officers and board of directors of the MOB to gain representation on the board of the Urban Coalition and to work to build an alliance with and seek advice when deemed

advantageous from such organization. The convention also endorsed a resolution asking the Minneapolis Society for the Blind to amend their bylaws to provide that at least one-third of the members of the MSB board shall be elected exclusively by adult blind residents of Minnesota, and that every meeting of the said board of directors henceforth be opened to any interested blind resident of Minnesota.

It was agreed that a letter of commendation be sent to the Communication Center for its outstanding coverage of all our functions and events and for reading *The Minnesota Bulletin* and other announcements.

Selection of delegates to the NFB Convention in Chicago was the final important business of the convention. Action was taken to also send a delegate from the Student Division, chosen by that Division. Archie Erickson, our president, was elected as delegate at large, and Jim Lukasavitz will serve as alternate. Joyce Hoffa will represent the Legislative Committee and Tom Scanlan will be the alternate.

PARTNERS IN LAW
by
Charitey Whitfield

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Louisville (Kentucky) *Courier-Journal* and *Times*.]

Individually, David E. Murrell and Laura Larkins Murrell are rare in the legal profession in Kentucky—he because he is one of only three blind lawyers practicing in the state; she because she is a woman in a field dominated by men.

Together, they are probably unique. Although there are no records available in the office of the Attorney General of Kentucky to prove it, Mrs. Murrell is "99 per cent sure" that she and her husband are the first married couple to be assistant attorneys general in the state.

Murrell, 34, has been an assistant attorney general since 1963. Mrs. Murrell joined Attorney General John Breckinridge's staff a year and a half ago. (At least one woman, Mrs. Joyce Nedde, held that position previously, from 1964 to 1966.)

"We consider ourselves very fortunate to have the Murrells," said James Neal, assistant deputy attorney general. "I think their abilities are outstanding."

Mrs. Murrell's story of why she entered the law profession may explain her husband's disregard for questions of competition in the family. "I went to law school for one simple reason: David wanted me to," said Mrs. Murrell.

Shortly after Murrell joined the attorney general's office he and the former Laura Larkins, of Harrodsburg and Paducah, were married in December of 1963. Afterwards, Mrs. Murrell began graduate studies in economics at the University of Kentucky, but that was short-lived.

Murrell's reason for persuading his wife to enter law school was that "I thought she had the kind of mind for law." His esteem for his wife's abilities date from the time he met her in the spring of 1961 when he was a first year law student at UK and she was an

undergraduate there. Murrell said that he was immediately impressed by her natural intelligence. . . .

Her law studies were interrupted by the birth of their first child, Dennis, now 5½, and the chores of managing a home, but Mrs. Murrell managed to be graduated seventh in her class of 125 and be named to Order of the Coif, a scholastic honor society for law students.

Murrell, too, blinded by glaucoma at age 5, has not had an easy road to achievement. But the retiring UK law school dean, Dr. William L. Matthews, said he isn't surprised that his former student now holds a position with the attorney general's office. "The first impression I had of him was that he is a very intelligent man," Dr. Matthews said. Dr. Matthews said the law school had no reservations about admitting Murrell but was only concerned whether he would have the techniques to overcome his handicap.

Murrell did. In addition to the readers whom Kentucky's rehabilitation program for the blind provided for him, Murrell was and is proficient in Braille, typing and taking good notes. Mrs. Murrell was one of his readers during his third year in law school.

Dr. Matthews remembers Murrell as "very pleasant and cheerful . . . a regular sort of person" who drew little attention to his blindness because "he paid little attention to it himself." Murrell ranked in the upper 10 or 15 per cent of his class and served on the staff of The Kentucky Law Journal.

A native of Erlanger, Murrell said his decision to attend college was

unprecedented in his family at that time. His blindness, he said, may be the reason he got a better education because it forced him to go to school. "I never would have made it without the state rehabilitation assistantships," Murrell said. "That's one reason I don't feel bad about paying taxes."

Murrell received his primary and secondary education at Kentucky School for the Blind and Atherton High School in Louisville. He then went to Covington to attend the UK extension there for two years and later enrolled at the Lexington campus. Being in the regular campus situation where he could be more independent and have greater social interactions, Murrell said, was the turning point in his life. "That was the first time I was in the normal sighted world. It was the greatest change in my life. It exhilarated me. It was sort of like just coming awake," Murrell said.

Although Murrell completed his undergraduate studies in 1958, he did not attend law school until two years later. "For a while I didn't do anything. I really don't know why. The boredom liked to have killed me," he said. During this interim Murrell began a small business of caning chairs. The activity helped release some of the pressure his new experiences had created and started him on the way to law.

"I really didn't have that much of a job choice," Murrell said of the vocations available to the blind at that time. The high degree of "intellectual mastery" that law required suited Murrell, who was a history major in undergraduate school.

Their profession is of vital interest to

the Murrells. Having neighboring offices in the state capitol, Mrs. Murrell said she and her husband often confer over cases or problems they may have.

Mrs. Murrell has primary jurisdiction in the attorney general's office over a number of legal questions including those of attachment and garnishment, insurance, teacher's retirement and the public service commission. Murrell has primary jurisdiction over cases concerning alcoholic beverages, anti-trust, conservation, strip-mining and motor transportation. Both Murrells have key roles in considering questions on legislative proposals.

In his eight years as an assistant attorney general Murrell has handled numerous cases, and Mrs. Murrell said she knows that he is proud of the role he played in securing water quality standards for Kentucky. His work in the areas of strip-mining and anti-trust have also been important to him. There is no doubt in Mrs. Murrell's mind as to what case has been most challenging to her. The proposed rate increase for South Central Bell Telephone Company has been "one case so far above all the cases I've ever handled," Mrs. Murrell said. She said that the case has occupied half her time since last October and that she has occasionally worked "around the clock" on it.

With their cases demanding so much time, it's not very easy for the Murrells to leave their work at the office. "Laura and I kid David and Bob about a hot line," said Mrs. Robert V. Bullock, whose husband is also an assistant attorney general. "As soon as they get home they're on the phone discussing their work. It goes on all evening."

The Murrells don't begrudge the demands their work makes upon their private lives. In fact, Mrs. Murrell said their work is one of the most exciting parts of their lives and her being an attorney enables them to share and discuss their experiences. . . .

In their private lives Mrs. Murrell is on the board of directors and her husband is a member of the Consumer Association of Kentucky. Murrell is also a member of the Commission for the Employment of the Handicapped. . . .

The Murrell's concern about human affairs is far ranging but they try not to let their personal biases affect their treatment of the cases assigned them.

"The state is my client. I am not the judge in the case," Murrell said. "Since I'm not the judge, I've got to be the advocate." Murrell said that he doesn't try to "manufacture" an argument that is devoid of legal merit.

When the Murrells are not at their offices, they can most likely be found at their home in the Southland area of Lexington with their children Dennis, 5 and Cathy, 3. . . .

In their private lives the Murrells find pleasure in attending plays and spending an evening with a few close friends. They both enjoy reading and occasionally Mrs. Murrell will read to her husband or take time to listen to some of the recordings he has on talking books. Murrell is more inclined towards histories while his wife loves novels as well as non-fiction. . . .

To those who know him, Murrell is a man who doesn't let his blindness

handicap him. "David sees things even though he doesn't use his eyes," said Bullock. "He perceives what people tell him. . . ."

"Many things are just what the good Lord has given you," said Murrell of his blindness. "I've always felt no matter how you feel today, if you endure things will change. . . ."

BLIND STUDENTS LIST THEIR PROBLEMS

by
Curtis Chong

[Reprinted from *ka leo o hawaii*, the student newspaper of the University of Hawaii. The author is also the President of the Student Chapter of the Hawaii Federation of the Blind.]

(Newspaper Editor's Note: Curtis Chong, a *ka leo* staff reporter, is blind. In this article, Chong draws upon his own experiences as well as those of other visually handicapped students on campus to present the feelings of blind UH'ers toward the problems they face.)

What are some of the real problems confronting blind students within the University of Hawaii and its community colleges? Are they in any way connected with the "frequent" collisions between blind students and bicyclists? Is the fact that sighted students do not often help a blind person to a seat such a big problem?

Perhaps the real problem of blindness is that the competence and innate normality of the average blind person is not often recognized by the public at

large. Could it be that Kokua, the very program set up to provide services for blind students, is, in itself, burdened with the same misconceptions and stereotypes about blindness as the general public? Just exactly what is this program all about?

On September 23, a five-minute film was shown on the television show "UH Today." This film detailed the many services provided by the Kokua program to students attending the University. The film said Kokua provides services to the blind as well as other handicapped students. It also stated that Kokua's purpose was not to do for the students, but rather to help students do for themselves.

Several blind students were asked if Kokua had realized its purpose with respect to blind students. "I don't think they've really realized it in depth," said Milton Ota, a blind student in his first year at Kapiolani Community College. "I see that they overprotect the blind."

"That's an admirable goal they are trying to achieve," commented Burt Yanagida, freshman, "but I don't know if they're getting there."

Robert Erle, a blind freshman from Missouri, said Kokua had not urged him to hire his own readers, buy his own books or register for himself. Time, he said, would not help Kokua come closer to its goal.

Michael Pitoy, a blind freshman and musician, said some blind people depend on the services provided by Kokua. A lot of blind students, he said, would be broken if there were no such program as Kokua. "Sometimes I think this is a hide-away for some people," he added.

"I think it's helping the majority of the blind students to do for themselves," said Susan Wakuzawa, a partially-blind student majoring in special education.

Some of those who feel Kokua's purpose was not being realized recommended that its early registration be discontinued. This service enables a blind student to be registered early on the first day of registration by Kokua volunteers. As a result, those blind students accepting this service need never fear the possibility of sections being closed to them.

"Other students have to face the possibility of not getting their classes," said Patricia Devlin, a blind freshman who did not accept the registration service. "If a blind student or any person wants equality with other people, he can't accept unnecessary privileges."

Gail Tanabe, a blind sophomore, feels the early registration service defeated Kokua's purpose of helping students do for themselves.

An opposite view was taken by Ms. Wakuzawa. "The reason they have people from Kokua go down to register for the blind and the handicapped students," she explained, "is because it's one thing to have two or three or five students register for 25 and it's another thing to have 50 come tramping down to register for 25." She explained one year Kokua had tried to have as many people as possible register for themselves. However, in her words, "They found it was too much of a hassle."

Most of the blind students interviewed feel the blind should not only have the same rights and privileges as the sighted; they should accept the same

responsibilities as well. Ms. Tanabe said if the blind students aren't willing to accept the same responsibilities as everybody else, they shouldn't come to college. "I try to take on all responsibilities upon my own self and not put it on someone else," Ota said.

One right to which qualified blind students are entitled has been denied them. This is the right to enter the College of Education. A ruling within the college states a student must not have a significant physical limitation. Blindness is construed to be such a limitation. As a result, totally blind students have been systematically barred from the college. "My feeling is that it is downright unfair," said Ms. Tanabe. "I think it's a matter of discrimination," said Ota. "At present there are, I think, two legally blind people who are teachers." He couldn't see why the College of Education still refuses entrance to qualified blind students.

What are some of the real problems confronting blind students in college? As far as this reporter is concerned, the problems of seat-finding and collisions with bicycles have, in the past, been blown up to such monumental proportions as to seem almost ludicrous. Such problems can and should be dealt with by the individual blind student and are of minimal importance. The blind students interviewed regard themselves as normal, capable individuals who have nothing in common with one another save their blindness and the problems arising therein.

What is of grave significance is the fact that the competence of qualified blind students is being questioned by a part of the very University which provides services to these students and supposedly

know what they can and can not do.

HOW WE CLIMBED THE BEN

by
David Scott Blackhall

[Reprinted by courtesy of *The Rotarian*, Evanston, Illinois.]

Every month the British Broadcasting Corporation puts out a program called *In Touch* which is specially devoted to the interests of blind listeners. Blind people talk to blind people about their activities, their successes and failures, their off-beat hobbies, and their unusual jobs. As in every walk of life, we can learn from each other and, within the context of this 15-minute program, we learn something about everything, from psychological adjustment to practical know-how. We applaud the achievements of one contributor, we disagree violently with another, we pick up a brilliant idea, or we hear one man's method of digging his garden or signing his letters and we realize that our own system is much simpler. It is a serious program but not a solemn one, and we learn that there is nothing in life so desperately burdensome that we can't squeeze a little fun out of it.

It was in October, 1961, that *In Touch* was born, and it is just coming up to its 100th edition. I have been the *compere* of the program from the beginning and have broadcast in many other B.B.C. programs, as well as holding down a senior position in local government. I am one of the fortunate ones—I had already established myself in a career when I lost my sight at the age of 45. And what is more important, I was

able to continue with the same kind of work, though not as a matter of course. I had to battle every inch of the way, and I like to think now, I hope without presumption, that I did so not merely on my own behalf but on behalf of all other disabled people on the face of the earth. When a man loses his sight, that's no time for him to lose his livelihood as well.

Introducing *In Touch* has provided me with many rewarding and many humbling experiences. I have met unpretentious people who, not by precept but by example, have renewed my faith, over and over again, that a man can be a hundred times better than any situation which life can invent. The most moving experience, the one with its head in the clouds, was the result of a chance remark, made on the spur of the moment, in an *In Touch* broadcast just one year ago this month.

My brief or script required me to mention that a party of blind Africans had set out to climb Kilimanjaro whose Kibo peak is the highest mountain in Africa at 19,340 feet. The blind in Africa have the greatest difficulty in getting any kind of employment and they have to contend against ancient prejudices which regard any form of physical handicap as a stigma. The blind, the halt, and the lame should be set aside, hidden in dark corners, and not shown to the world. The blind climbers contend fiercely that they wanted not to be set apart, they wanted a stake in the game, they wanted to seek out a space for themselves and fill it with useful endeavor. With sighted friends as guides, they would climb a mountain, they would step out of the dark corners into the limelight, not for the sake of the limelight, not for vainglory, but to

illustrate convincingly that they were entitled to a place in the affairs of men. I added a few words of my own.

"We haven't anything in this country as high as Kilimanjaro," I said. "The highest is Ben Nevis, 4,406 feet. I wonder if any of my listeners are interested in making up a climbing party to tackle Ben Nevis."

It was as easy as that. I picked up a snowflake and started an avalanche. Like Saul, the son of Kish, I went to feed my father's asses and found a kingdom. Blind people wrote to me from all parts of the country. One of them, writing to me in Braille, said: "I am also a diabetic so I have two reasons for coming."

Ben Nevis is in the Northwest of Scotland, and a Scottish newspaper picked up the item from *In Touch* and announced that a party of blind people were intending to climb the Ben. I received a letter—the luckiest thing which has ever happened to me—from Bob MacKinnon, a Scout Leader in Fort William, at the foot of the mountain we were intending to climb. If we needed any assistance, he said, we could count on him. I replied promptly that the offer was gratefully accepted.

Blind people, by and large, are not the wealthiest people in the world and some of them, with university degrees, are working as telephone operators. There is no need to go as far as Africa to find prejudice. Roughly 300 years ago, John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*, the greatest epic poem in English literature. Milton was blind. And now, in the 20th Century, there are still those who would have us believe that the only recourse for a blind

man is a begging bowl. When I informed my volunteers that it would cost about 20 pounds per person to spend a weekend in Fort Williams for the conquest of the Ben, I was not surprised, though I was profoundly disappointed, that my numbers had dwindled to 16. I wrote to Bob MacKinnon and he reserved accommodation for us in the Milton Hotel. Yes, as luck would have it, the Milton Hotel.

Newspapers began to telephone and ask me for details. The same question always cropped up, sooner or later. "Where are you staying?" "The Milton Hotel, appropriately enough." Always, a short pause. Then, "Why appropriately?" Always the same answer. "You haven't heard of John Milton, the blind poet?" I am pleased to record that no one asked me whether he was a member of the climbing party!

The publicity was not sought and it landed me in a kind of trouble which I had not expected. I received a letter from the chief constable of Inverness-shire advising me, in the strongest possible terms, to abandon "this foolhardy enterprise." In very official and uncompromising language, I was informed that there were many fatalities on the Ben each year, even among sighted climbers, and if anything like this happened on our particular excursion I was likely to be involved in criminal proceedings. I telephoned the chief constable and asked him what had happened to the spirit of Robert Bruce. "Never mind about Robert Bruce," he rejoined, and I was delighted that I had given him a phrase with so many R's. It was a pleasure to my ear. That's another reason, I thought for climbing the Ben. We have to convince the chief constable that

blind people can take part.

Eight blind people, with three sighted guides, set off from London on the early morning of July 11. It was Robert Bruce's birthday. Most of us were meeting for the first time. Only two people in the party were already known to me, Esther Bellis, a music teacher, and Tony de Silva, a doctor of 53 doing important administrative work in the medical world. I met Mike Tetley for the first time, who had himself climbed Kilimanjaro when he could see. He was 6 feet 5 and had lost his sight in a bomb incident in Kenya. He had brought his 10-year-old daughter to act as guide. I felt a few misgivings about this but I decided that I ought not to be prejudiced. I discovered that Maurice Lovell, at 60, was the father of our party. He was a champion swimmer and high diver and he had brought with him a set of bagpipes, with the intention, so he said, of piping us on to the summit.

After nearly 13 hours in the train, we arrived at Fort William at 9:00 o'clock in the evening. The rest of the blind mountaineers, who had travelled from other parts of the country, met us at the Milton Hotel and the roll was called and the bedrooms were allocated. Bob MacKinnon, with some of his mountaineering friends, had met us at the station, and we now assembled in the dining room for a run-down on the hazards of the Ben. In some ways, this was worse than the actual climb. One blind man, who had not communicated directly with me, travelled 150 miles from Aberdeen with the intention of latching on to the party. When he heard the briefing on Friday evening, he decided to remain anonymous. I knew nothing of this until he introduced himself to me on

Sunday evening.

I began to wonder how many of Bob's friends had, strictly speaking, volunteered. Douglas and Joan had been married that day and were supposed to be on their honeymoon. At Bob's suggestion they had postponed it until the following Monday. If Bob was able to coerce a man from his honeymoon, I thought, he is surely capable of leading a blind party up the mountain. I believe he could have done it single-handed.

At half past 9 on Saturday morning we set foot on the Ben. Sixteen of us, with nearly as many sighted guides. At this stage, only the sighted guides looked worried. Fourteen blind men, two blind women and three guide dogs moved off among the boulders and the going was rough from the moment we left the pavement. Bob deployed his experts at strategic points along the Indian file of climbers. The girl who was a music teacher in private life held the sleeve of a guide and trailed her scarf for one of the blind climbers to hold. This was all the guidance we needed. Our feet could find the path, or the lack of it, once we could depend on it that we were moving in the right direction. I thought of the many good-natured people who, in the familiar surroundings of our own home towns, insist on seeing us safely across the highways and do so by clutching us grimly in a kind of half-nelson, lifting us up and down the curb-stones and propelling us through the traffic in what can only be described as a bum's rush. I wish they could have seen us on the mountain.

In a little while, the sighted guides began to gain confidence, especially when one of them missed his footing and the

blind man whom he was leading, reflexes at concert pitch, grabbed him quickly and prevented him from falling. But it was not simply climbing and scrambling. The first half of the climb is notorious for its dilapidated, home-made bridges across mountain torrents and deep ravines. At one point, Bob and his noble band had to heave boulders into a mountain burn to improve a ford. We went across on precarious stepping-stones with the noise of the water drowning the voices of our instructors. It was slightly unnerving. All the time, uncomplainingly, our 10-year-old girl was leading her 6-foot-5 father, hand gently in hand, heart steadfast in heart.

We battled on into a heavy rain-cloud and the hoods were pulled up and the wet faces shone with renewed determination. Every man jack of us, if he had been climbing alone, would have called it a day when the weather turned against us.

At the halfway stage we rested and the flasks came out of the haversacks and we sipped luxuriously the piping hot coffee. Derek, who was the diabetic, now confessed that he had twisted his knee and it was getting more and more painful. Very wisely, he decided that he ought to go back. One of the guides was appointed to see Derek safely back to base. This, I quoted to myself, was the noblest Roman of them all. The party, minus two, moved on and up.

Fred Reid, a blind graduate of Edinburgh and Cambridge, with a doctorate in social history, confided to me that his physical resources had just about petered out but he still had his will power. There was loose scree under our feet and the going was hard. At 3,500 feet,

Bernard, with the utmost reluctance, had to confess that he was licked. With the last thousand feet ahead of us, a guide could not be spared. Bob called us together and addressed us with an earnestness and solemnity which stamped him, more surely than anything which had gone before, as a born leader. He didn't sound a bit like his mere 22 years.

"I can't spare one of the experienced climbers," he said. "I want one of the sighted companions to stay behind with Bernard while the party goes on to the summit. It is important to understand that the two of them must stay here for about two-and-a-half hours. We will collect them on the way back. Visibility is about 20 yards and if they move from here we shall never find them."

No one spoke for a very long time. It was probably not more than about 20 seconds, but it seemed like a day and a half. Then Thena said quietly that she would stay.

"I have to think about coming back," said Bernard, "otherwise I would go on." We felt some of the weight of his misery but none of us could find words, and we made small, inarticulate noises of sympathy.

Now it was a long, hard slog and no more bridges. We came out of the rain but we were still enveloped in the infamous Scotch mist. My own companion told me that we had reached a signpost marked "4,000 feet." Four hundred feet to go in altitude and it must have been more than half a mile in distance. I stopped and called out to those behind, "Four thousand feet."

"Is that you, David?"

"Hello, Fred. How's the will power?"

"I ran out of will power a long time ago. All I have now is my stupid pride and arrogance."

We hadn't the breath to spare for long speeches but someone remarked: "Who was that idiot who said 'Because it's there!'"

We thought originally that one cramped hand of cold fingers would be enough to count the blind climbers who would reach the summit, and when we stood triumphantly on the topmost rock of the highest mountain in our land we were tired and wet and cold—and we were 14 strong! I felt immensely proud, not for myself, but for those who had come with me. And once again, I confirmed to myself that when you do things together the enterprise itself seems to acquire an individual strength. Then Maurice blew some life into his fingers and held the chanter and the drone and nestled the bag under his arm. Lips and fingers were unwilling and the instrument was surely wetter than any bagpipes about to be played had ever been before. It was a little while before Maurice could coax the first note out of them.

A thousand feet below and nearly a mile away, Thena and Bernard waited, a little disconsolately, leaning against the wet rock.

"Listen!" said Thena. Faintly through the mist they heard the exultation of the pipes. Their faces lit up and they shook hands and grinned at each other.

“We’ve made it!” they said.

Fourteen out of 16—12 men and two women. Three guide dogs and a little girl of ten, who came to help her war-blinded father.

It took us five hours to come down and we had spent more than 11 hours on the mountain. For seven of those hours we had moved through sharp, cold, driving rain and hail. Our modest equipment couldn’t stand up to conditions like these. We were all soaked to the skin and rich in the joy of each other. Everyone was glad now that the conditions had been so unfavorable. It made the achievement that much greater.

I shall remember a few of us going out on Sunday morning and meeting the old shepherd who came from the Isle of Skye and had been tending the sheep on the slopes of the Ben for 40 years. He was accompanied by two dogs and he was carrying a shepherd’s crook, made out of a switch of hazel, with a ram’s horn for a handle. They call it a *cromach* in those parts, “As step I with my cromach to the Isles.” I am quite sure he looked like something out of an old illustrated Bible. He was Caklum McFee and we stopped and passed the time of day.

He had obviously read something about us in the Scottish newspapers and he addressed himself to Maurice and me.

“Were you in the blind party which climbed the Ben?”

“That’s right.”

“If you’ll walk down the road to my little bungalow, I’ll give you a cromach

apiece to take home with you.”

That is a very proud memento, a spontaneous gift from a real Highland gentleman.

I shall also fondly remember the celebrations on Sunday evening. The Gaelic word is “ceilidh” and it is a mixture of Mafeking Night, VE day, and Thanksgiving rolled into a ball and set alight. When we sang *Auld Lang Syne* the tears were falling down our faces, we were so incredibly happy! Bob said: “I’ll take your lot up the mountain any time.” Derek and Bernard made a date for next year.

Best of all—and I recognize that there’s a hint of vainglory about it—by far the best of all was when I came back to my room on the Saturday, the Glorious Twelfth. I started to peel off a rainsoaked anorak when there was a tap on the door. Bob and two of his volunteers came in.

“Well,” said Bob, “how do you feel?”

“Boys,” I replied, “you were splendid.”

Bob said, “You weren’t so bad yourself.”

It was the accolade. Perhaps, like King Lear, I am a very foolish, fond old man but every time I think of that moment, my eyes are full of tears.

When I came home, I had some illuminated certificates prepared, tastefully lettered and decorated, and I sent one to each of the climbers, blind and sighted, with the name of the recipient

engraved in copperplate. At the bottom of the certificate, the legend was repeated in braille.

It is hereby proclaimed that
John Bull
is a Founder Member of the
Milton Mountaineers with effect
from 12th July 1969 and until
the last boulder of Ben Nevis
shall roll down to the sea.

* * * * *

RECIPE OF THE MONTH
by
Nelia James

[Editor's Note: Nick and Nelia James are devoted Federationists who work at the Headquarters Office of the NFB of California in Los Angeles. They volunteer their time stuffing envelopes and doing other such chores. Nick James has charge of the Tape Library and sees that the tape edition of *The Blind Californian* is distributed to all interested readers.]

FIVE CAN CASSEROLE

Combine the following:

1 can drained and flaked tuna;
1 small can evaporated milk;
1 can chicken rice soup;
1 can mushroom soup; and
1 large can Chinese noodles.

Mix well and pour into buttered casserole. Sprinkle with ½ cup grated Cheddar cheese. Bake uncovered for about 45 minutes at 350 F.

* * * * *

MONITOR MINIATURES

Late in December President Nixon signed into law a bill requiring most able-bodied welfare recipients to register for jobs or job training. It is felt by many that the new law will hurt the chances of the Administration's Welfare Reform bill, still pending in the Congress, since it provides the stick but not the carrot. We cannot help but feel that such gestures are something less than forthright. The new law requires able-bodied recipients to sign up for work or job training to continue to receive public assistance benefits. With six percent of the nation's work force unemployed, however, the new law will mean little more than the registration of one million current recipients.

* * * * *

The new National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) has not yet finally decided whether it will continue to honor the one-fare concession for a blind person and his sighted guide. This concession was originally authorized by the Congress in 1927. Amtrak has decided to continue the policy only through April 29, 1972 when a final policy will be determined. Bus companies are not affected by the Amtrak action.

* * * * *

The American Foundation for the Blind announces that it has increased its 1971-72 print version of the Aids and Appliances catalog to 100,000 copies, and these are now available for free distribution upon application to the Foundation. The Braille version of 5,000 copies remains the same as previously and is also available free. The new catalog lists

approximately 300 items in 16 categories. Seventeen new items are included.

* * * * *

The U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare reports that from January to June, 1970, 19,400 requests for fair hearings by public assistance recipients were received by State agencies. The number of hearing requests filed in the States ranged from a low of six in Vermont to a high of 3,800 in New York. However, two large States, California and Ohio, did not report. In California alone it is now estimated that there is a back-log of some 20,000 requests for fair hearings. The need for assistance was the chief issue in most of the requests. Blindness and other disabilities was the second largest issue. Slightly more than one-fourth of the requests disposed of resulted in favor of the claimant.

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The New York State Workmen's Compensation Board recently held that blindness resulting from "harassment" and "pressures" was, indeed, "an industrial accident" and should be compensated for as such. The individual was an associate director of housing for the Human Rights Commission. After a "confrontation" with the Commissioner, the employee suffered hemorrhages in both eyes, resulting in blindness shortly thereafter. The New York State Insurance Fund has filed an appeal with the courts against the ruling. The finding that job pressures can be the cause of blindness is the latest in a series of cases in recent years where awards have been made in "no contact on the job type accidents" such as from heart attacks and deaths from overwork and worry.

* * * * *

The AFB newsletter, published by the American Foundation for the Blind, reports that Oscar Cohen, national program director for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, feels that blind people will inevitably become more militant in their demands for equal employment and acceptance. "As each minority group in our society has watched the gains of others as they have reaped the rewards of militancy, each minority group in turn has become more militant. Inevitably this will happen with the blind," Mr. Cohen said. He emphasized that blind people, like all minority groups, suffer both prejudice and discrimination. Discrimination will end, he said, only if there is a massive legislative and educational program in this country. Mr. Cohen urged the development of a concerted legislative program in which blind and other handicapped persons would be brought under current Federal and State anti-discrimination laws.

* * * * *

Mary Hartle reports that since its inception in 1967, the Student Division of the National Federation of the Blind has grown tremendously. Kansas is another case in point. One of the major accomplishments of a recent meeting was the election of temporary officers for nine-month terms. They are president, Joe Gutierrez; vice president, Becky Bullington.

* * * * *

As of January 24th, the Tallahassee chapter of the NFB had new officers. They are: Craig Kiser, president; Linda Starks, vice president; Mindy Fliegelman, recording secretary; Annely Vilbas,

corresponding secretary; and Dorothy Lane, treasurer. Craig Kiser is currently going to Florida State University. After graduation this spring he plans to go on to law school. With a leader like him, the chapter is sure to be an active one which will go places.

* * * * *

The Optacon, a reading aid for the blind, is the result of intensive research and development efforts conducted at Stanford University and the Stanford Research Institute. These efforts, which have taken more than six years, include engineering and psychophysical studies as well as field testing with blind persons. Telesensory Systems, Inc. (TSI) has recently been formed to manufacture and market the Optacon and associated accessories and training equipment.

The new, small model of the Optacon is now in production. It is about the size of a textbook, and it weighs less than four pounds. Like earlier models, it works by converting the image of a printed letter into a tactile image that a blind person can feel with one finger. After a period of training and practice, a blind person can use the Optacon to read ordinary books, magazines, newspapers, etc. Reading rates of up to 80 words per minute have been achieved.

* * * * *

Bernard Bagwell of Chattanooga, Tennessee and his wife Mary, received a good writeup in the *Times Registry* on the occasion of the publication of his record album called "That I May See." It includes religious songs sung in his "magnificent tenor voice." He is accompanied by

organist Jon Robere. Both Bagwells are blind--and very independent. Despite training at some of the country's best music conservatories, due to prejudice and discrimination on the part of potential employers, the closest Mr. Bagwell came to a teaching job was tuning pianos for the schools. In 1969, however, he went to work at the Lansford Piano Company in Chattanooga, where he and his wife have made their home and are active members of their community.

* * * * *

The Orangeburg Chapter of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind was recently organized, with many of the State officers, led by President Donald C. Capps, in attendance. Elected officers of the new group were: Mrs. John Smoak, president; Jack Drawdy, vice president; Miss Faye Burgess, secretary; Odell Austin, treasurer; Mrs. Ivy Cooley, social director; Amos James, music director. The new president is optimistic that the Orangeburg Aurora Club of the Blind will fill a social, spiritual and economic need in the lives of blind people in the area.

* * * * *

Los Angeles, California, February 7, 1972--Apollo Lasers, Inc. announces a new portable closed circuit TV system designated the Model 4 Electronic Visual Aid to help people with visual impairment. It features a horizontally mounted camera.

The new system utilizes a compact camera stand which may be used with an industrial TV monitor, or with an ordinary home TV receiver. The camera stand includes a zoom lens, ball bearing mounted scanning table, picture reversal

camera, and special spotlight illuminator. The result is a high contrast magnified image of printed and written material.

The high sensitivity of the optical system results in an unusually large depth of field which permits easy reading of curved books and periodicals.

"The new model will be most appealing to those people who need a portable, attractive system for home or office," states Dr. Fred P. Burns, President of *Apollo Lasers, Inc.*

* * * * *

The *Sunday News* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) reports that eleven blind people from the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area have qualified and received their Red Cross First Aid Certificates. They join a growing number of blind groups who have been active in the First Aid and Life Saving courses offered by the American Red Cross throughout the country.

* * * * *

Tom Anderson of Washougal, Washington, has been appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment by Mayor Ralph Hootman. Anderson performs the usual duties, using braille to record transactions and governing rules and regulations.

* * * * *

Dave Stoffel, blind student at Johns Hopkins University, has earned a place as a freestyler on the varsity swim team. The team coach, Frank Comfort, is thinking about adding him to the relay team, since his times have improved so much and

continue to get better.

* * * * *

[The following story is reprinted from *Telstar*, publication of the National Federation of the Blind of North Dakota.] Keith Overvold is co-owner of the Oldsmobile-Cadillac dealership in Fargo, North Dakota. He does other things too, like installing an intricate intercom-stereo sound system in his home and designing and building a complicated plumbing system that can both backflush his swimming pool and water his back yard. He also is an accomplished musician. What makes all of these activities particularly significant is this: Keith Overvold is sightless. In fact, he is believed to be the only sightless automobile dealer in this country. This past spring the Minnesota Governor's Commission on Employment of Handicapped Persons named the 40-year-old Overvold "Handicapped Minnesotan of the Year." "I really don't consider myself handicapped," says Overvold. . . . The telephone rings in his office. Someone wants to know about the features on a new shipment of cars. Overvold takes about a dozen three-by-five cards from his desk and begins to read the braille markings, detailing model, color, special features and other data for each new car. . . . Despite all of Mr. Overvold's other hobbies and activities, he says music remains his favorite avocation. He graduated from Concordia in 1952 with a double major in music and economics. And between then and 1957 he performed professionally. "I left the music profession because I didn't want to travel." So in 1957, he opened a car dealership in Moorhead and operated it for nearly a decade before merging it with the Fargo dealership in a new showroom and shop to

serve both cities. He and his brother, Clifford, now operate the dealership that employs over forty persons and places a heavy emphasis on service. "We have the latest equipment, a large parts inventory, and qualified people," says Keith Overvold. "The total experience in the service department is over 300 years."

In his management work, Mr. Overvold has devised an extensive record-keeping system for inventory control and other business information. "The Minneapolis branch of General Motors made a study of the way I've condensed record information and my system is being used throughout the country in inventory control." He is a busy man, but he has been very generous with his time. I thank him and as I leave his office a wall plaque catches my attention. The plaque had on it a well-known quotation, one that Mr. Overvold is obviously intent on practicing. "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I do or kindness

that I can show to any human being, let me do it now." Sightless? In a way, but handicapped? He's right. He really isn't.

* * * * *

The Colorado Federation of the Blind elected a new slate of officers at its late fall convention: Lyle Neff, of Denver, president; Carl Coleman, Colorado Springs, first vice-president; Glen Ausmus, Grand Junction, second vice-president; Susan Ford, Greeley, recording secretary; Diane McGeorge, Denver, corresponding secretary; Georgia Cox, Denver, treasurer. Board members from each local affiliate were also elected. Five resolutions were adopted by the convention. One directed the officers of the organization to do what is necessary to submit a bill to the legislature proposing the establishment of a Commission for the Blind in the State. Two other resolutions concerned themselves with library services to the blind at the State and national levels.

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